



# Department of Justice

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## **FORMER SALVADORAN CONGRESSMAN CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY TO IMPORT AND DISTRIBUTE COCAINE INTO THE UNITED STATES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Acting Assistant Attorney General John C. Richter of the Criminal Division announced today that a federal jury in Washington, D.C., has convicted former Salvadoran congressman William Eliu-Martinez on charges of conspiracy to import and distribute cocaine into the United States.

The jury deliberated less than eight hours over two days before returning the guilty verdicts Monday afternoon. The case was prosecuted by Department of Justice Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section Trial Attorneys Michael Mota, Patrick Hern and James Faulkner, during a two-and-a-half week trial before Judge Michael M. Mihm, visiting judge from the Central District of Illinois.

The two-count indictment charging Martinez was returned in October 2003, and Martinez was arrested by DEA agents in Panama the following month.

“Martinez, a significant Central American cocaine trafficker, now knows that he could not evade the long arm of international justice,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Richter. “These verdicts send a strong message that large-scale cocaine traffickers who send narcotics to the United States can be effectively prosecuted, no matter where they operate.”

Martinez’s co-defendant, Otto Herrera Garcia, is currently a fugitive and international efforts to locate and prosecute him continue.

The DEA investigation of Martinez’s drug trafficking activities was conducted in close cooperation with several Central American law enforcement agencies. Investigators and prosecutors enjoyed particularly strong support from the government of El Salvador.

Martinez is scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 12, 2005. He faces up to life in prison.

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