COURT FILING · PLAIN-LANGUAGE BRIEF

U.S. grand jury indicts Alex Saab on money-laundering charges

United States v. Alex Nain Saab Morán · S.D. Fla. No. 1:19-cr-20450 (2019 case)
Judge Robert N. Scola Jr. · Docket entry #1 · Filed 2019-07-25 · Filed by: Government

What happened

On July 25, 2019, a federal grand jury in the Southern District of Florida indicted Alex Nain Saab Morán and Álvaro Pulido Vargas (also known as 'German Enrique Rubio Salas') on one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering and seven additional counts of laundering monetary instruments. Prosecutors allege that, from 2011 to 2015, the defendants bribed Venezuelan officials at SENIAT, the National Guard and CADIVI to approve false invoices tied to a low-income housing contract with the Venezuelan government, in order to obtain dollar payments for construction goods that were never actually imported. The indictment traces roughly $350 million in wire transfers linked to the scheme.

What it means

This indictment is the founding document of the U.S. criminal case, No. 1:19-cr-20450, against Saab; it would lead to his fugitive status, his 2020 arrest in Cape Verde, and his 2021 extradition to the United States. Prosecutors are also seeking forfeiture of more than $350 million, plus several specific sums seized between 2018 and 2019.

What happens next

No further date is stated in this document; the case would proceed with the August 26, 2019 order transferring it to fugitive status, since the defendants had not yet appeared.

Key passages from the filing (verbatim)

> *"to knowingly transport, transmit, and transfer a monetary instrument and funds from a place in the United States to and through a place outside the United States, and to a place in the United States from and through a place outside the United States, with the intent to promote the carrying on of specified unlawful activity"*
> Page 4 — Describes the core money-laundering charge.

> *"to Venezuelan foreign officials, in order to obtain improper business advantages, including the approval of false and fraudulent documents related to the importation of construction goods and materials, and to access Venezuela's government-controlled foreign currency exchange system"*
> Page 5 — Explains the conspiracy's alleged purpose.

> *"caused wire transfers totaling approximately $350,041,500 to be made from bank accounts in Venezuela owned and controlled by SAAB and PULIDO, through correspondent bank accounts in the United States, and then to overseas bank accounts owned and controlled by SAAB and PULIDO"*
> Page 7 — Gives the central figure of the alleged laundering scheme.

Docket text (official, in English)

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INDICTMENT as to Alex Nain Saab Moran (1) count(s) 1, 2-8, Alvaro Pulido Vargas (2) count(s) 1, 2-8.
FORFEITURE. (at) (Additional attachment(s) added on 7/25/2019: # 1 Restricted Unredacted Indictment)
(at). (Entered: 07/25/2019)
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Online version: https://mailmaduro.com/caso.php?d=saab-sdfl-2019-e1