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V.I. Law Enforcement and Prosecutors Honored for Dismantling Cocaine Trafficking Ring, Including 8 Boats and 87 Kilograms of Cocaine

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ST. THOMAS — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Wednesday that federal, state, local and territorial law enforcement and prosecutors were honored during a virtual Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) ceremony this morning.

The awards ceremony included presentation of the OCDETF National Award for Outstanding Investigation to the District of the Virgin Islands OCDETF Program for Operation Py Beto Kilo. Awards presenters included OCDETF Executive Office and Regional Office personnel, representatives from the Drug Enforcement Administration, USVI Superior Court Judge and

former federal prosecutor Alphonso Andrews, and VIPD Assistant Commissioner Elskoe.

The awards ceremony acknowledged the contributions of 48 law enforcement officers, agents and prosecutors who contributed to the successful multi-year investigation, disruption, and dismantlement of a notorious drug trafficking organization that transported hundred-kilo cocaine loads from Colombia through Venezuela on fishing vessels across the Caribbean to St. Croix, Puerto Rico and Florida.

Operation Py Beto Kilo lead to the June 26, 2018 conviction at trial of drug kingpin Sergio Quinone-Davila and five codefendants on cocaine-related charges. The investigation ultimately resulted in convictions for 14 defendants, and seizure of 87 kilograms of cocaine and 8 boats.

According to U.S. Attorney Shappert, “Today’s ceremony acknowledges the tremendous contributions of dedicated law enforcement agencies and prosecution offices that work collaboratively to disrupt and dismantle major drug organizations. National recognition of our efforts in the Virgin Islands is a testament to the excellent work and dedication of our OCDETF Task Force partners.”

Established in 1982, OCDETF is the largest anti-crime task force in the United States. It operates as an independent component of the U.S. Department of Justice and is the centerpiece of the Attorney General’s strategy to combat transnational organized crime. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest level drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations that threaten the United States by using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach that leverages the strengths of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies against criminal networks.