

## US charges two of El Chapo's sons with drug trafficking



Mexican drug baron Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman (File)

### New York, United States

Two sons of Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman -- both on the run in Mexico -- have been charged with drug trafficking by US authorities, the Department of Justice said Thursday.

Joaquin Guzman Lopez, 34, and 28-year-old Ovidio Guzman Lopez, were accused last year of conspiring to distribute cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine from Mexico and other countries into the US between 2008 and 2018.

The indictment was revealed Thursday, having only been unsealed last week to protect the investigation and witnesses.

If convicted, the pair face a minimum sentence of 20 years and up to life in prison.

"El Chapo" was earlier this month found guilty of trafficking over 130 tons of drugs into the US by a New York jury. Facing a mandatory sentence of life behind bars, which will be announced on June 25.

Another of his sons, Jesus Alfredo Guzman Salazar, was charged with several drug trafficking offenses in 2014 and remains on the DEA's 10 most wanted list.

Another son, Ivan Archivaldo Guzman Salazar, was also implicated in drug trafficking by Mexican authorities.

"El Chapo" has several children with different women. The youngest, seven-year-old twin girls, attended several of their father's court hearings and one day of his trial at a Brooklyn federal court alongside their mother, former beauty queen Emma Coronel.

# Family of IS teen to fight UK decision

### London, United Kingdom

The family of a London teenager who joined the Islamic State group in Syria said yesterday it would challenge the British government's decision to revoke her citizenship.

Shamima Begum travelled to Syria in 2015 aged just 15 but has now fled the crumbling "caliphate" and says she wants to come home, after giving birth in a refugee camp last weekend.

A letter to interior minister Sajid Javid written by Begum's sister Renu on behalf of her family also called on the government to help bring her newborn son to Britain.

The fate of the 19-year-old has triggered fierce debate in Britain, with the government telling her family this week that it was revoking her citizenship.

"We hope you understand our position in this respect and why we must, therefore, assist Shamima in challenging your decision to take away the one thing that is her only hope at rehabilitation, her British citizenship," the family's letter said.

Renu Begum's letter also asked Javid to help "in bringing my nephew home to us".

It said Shamima Begum's status would now be a matter for British courts to decide.

International law prevents a government from rendering a person stateless, but Britain reportedly believes that Begum also has Bangladeshi citizenship due to her parents, although she was born in Britain.

The Bangladeshi government said there was "no question" of her being allowed to enter, and there is legal argument about whether simply having Bangladeshi parents bestows citizenship.



Shamima Begum passing through security barriers at Gatwick Airport, south of London

Begum's baby was born before she was told of the decision to revoke her citizenship, and is therefore British and has a right to return.

The teenager said she was "shocked" by Britain's decision, saying "if you take that away from me, I don't have anything. I don't think they are allowed to do that."

She has mentioned the possibility of applying for citizenship in the Netherlands because her husband, an IS fighter believed to be held by Kurdish forces in Syria, is a Dutch national.

## China against forcefully sending aid to Venezuela

### Beijing, China

China said yesterday it was against forcefully sending "so-called humanitarian assistance" to Venezuela, warning it could spark conflict in the crisis-torn country.

China has loaned billions to Venezuela and has remained committed to President Nicolas Maduro even as the country has fallen deeper into economic crisis.

Foreign aid mostly from the US has piled up on Venezuela's borders as the Maduro government refuses to let it into the country.

"If the so-called humanitarian assistance were forcefully sent to Venezuela it might trigger conflict and lead to serious consequences," said China's foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang.

"China is against a military intervention in Venezuela and against any behaviour that might cause escalation or turmoil," he told reporters.

Opposition leader and self-declared interim president Juan Guaido has vowed to bring aid in from various points Saturday "one way or another" despite military efforts to block it.

## Michael Jackson estate sues HBO over documentary



US pop megastar Michael Jackson performing during his "Dangerous" tour.

### Los Angeles, United States

Michael Jackson's estate filed a \$100 million lawsuit against HBO on Thursday over plans to air a documentary that alleges the singer sexually abused two young boys.

The 53-page suit, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, claims HBO was violating a "non-disparagement" agreement by airing "Leaving Neverland," which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival this year.

"Michael Jackson is innocent. Period," the suit says. "In 2005, Michael Jackson was subjected to a trial -- where rules of evidence and law were applied before a neutral judge and jury and where both sides were heard -- and he was exonerated by a sophisticated jury.

"Ten years after his passing, there are still those out to profit from his enormous worldwide success and take advantage of his eccentricities," it adds.

The four-hour, two-part documentary that is set to air

next month includes the testimonies of two men, Wade Robson and James Safechuck, who say the King of Pop sexually abused them when they were seven and 10.

In a statement, HBO said it planned to broadcast the documentary as scheduled.

"Despite the desperate lengths taken to undermine the film, our plans remain unchanged," the statement sent to AFP reads. "HBO will move forward with the airing of 'Leaving Neverland,' the two-part documentary on March 3rd and 4th.

The lawsuit contends that HBO in 1992 aired a concert in Bucharest from Jackson's "Dangerous" world tour and at the time signed non-disparagement provisions that prevent the streaming service from harming Jackson's reputation.

Jackson, who died on June 25, 2009 after being given an overdose of the anesthetic propofol, faced multiple allegations of child sex abuse during his lifetime.

## US military conducts observation flight over Russia

### Washington, United States

The US military is conducting a surveillance flight over Russia as part of an international agreement, the Pentagon said Thursday.

The flight falls under the Open Skies Treaty, an international accord aimed at promoting military transparency through reciprocal, unarmed observation flights over each

of the 34 signatory countries' terrains.

Due to tensions with Russia, this is the first Open Skies flight there since November 2017, Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Davis said.

"Russia is aware of the flight," he said.

"Six Russian Federation observers are on board the US aircraft to monitor all phases of the flight."

## Russian rocket launches Egyptian telecom satellite

### Moscow, Russia

Russia successfully launched an Egyptian telecommunications satellite on Thursday, the Russian space agency Roskosmos announced.

A Soyuz rocket took off with the Egyptsat-A satellite at 1647 GMT from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan,

The satellite will take high-definition images of the

Earth's surface, Roskosmos said in a statement.

"The satellite has been placed in orbit, all is working well," space agency spokesman Vladimir Ostimenko said, according to the Russian RIA Novosti news agency.

In October a Soyuz rocket carrying a Russian and US astronaut failed just minutes after blast-off, forcing the pair to make an emergency landing.

## Google moves to fix YouTube glitch for child porn

### Washington, United States

Google-owned YouTube said Thursday it was taking action to close a loophole that enabled users to share comments and links on child pornography over the video-sharing service.

The response came after a YouTube creator this week revealed what he called a "wormhole" that allowed comments and connections on child porn alongside innocuous videos.

"Any content -- including comments -- that endangers minors is abhorrent and we have clear policies prohibiting this on YouTube," a spokesman said in an email.

"We took immediate action by deleting accounts and channels, reporting illegal activity to authorities and disabling comments on tens of millions of videos that include minors. There's more to be done, and we continue to work to improve and catch abuse more quickly."

The move came after Matt Watson, a YouTube creator with some 26,000 subscribers, re-



Representative picture (Courtesy of Verge)

vealed the workings of what he termed a "wormhole" into a pedophile ring that allowed users to trade social media contacts and links to child porn in YouTube comments.

Watson, who uses the name MattsWhatItIs, added that YouTube's recommendation algorithm "due to some kind of glitch is actually facilitating this."

Because ads automatically

appear with many YouTube videos, Watson said the actions of the company amounted to "monetizing" the exploitation.

The post by Watson sparked a series of news reports, and according to some media, boycotts of YouTube ads from major firms including Nestle and Disney.

AT&T, which owns the WarnerMedia entertainment unit, confirmed it was pulling

its ads from the service.

"Until Google can protect our brand from offensive content of any kind, we are removing all advertising from YouTube," AT&T said in a statement to AFP.

Epic Games, known for its popular online game Fortnite, said it was suspending ads on YouTube following the news.

"We have paused all pre-roll advertising" on YouTube, a company spokesman said.

"Through our advertising agency, we have reached out to Google/YouTube to determine actions they'll take to eliminate this type of content from their service."

The glitch appeared to allow some users to circumvent bans on child porn by Google and other internet platforms.

The incident raised fears of a fresh "brand safety" crisis for YouTube, which lost advertisers last year following revelations that messages appeared on channels promoting conspiracy theories, white nationalism and other objectionable content.