



Mexican fugitive “Chapo” Guzmán used gas stations to launder money

The retailing fuel business was a favourite money laundering venue for Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, head of the Sinaloa cartel and internationally famous for recently escaping from a maximum-security Mexican prison, according to the U.S. Treasury Department.

Investigating Guzmán’s money laundering record, the Treasury Department has found that between 2007 and 2014 he created a network of 95 companies across Mexico. Fourteen of which were connected to the national government through contracts or leases.

The investigation has found numerous gas stations between the 95 companies were used to launder money by Guzmán and his Sinaloa cartel. It is reported that 8 filling stations in the state of Sinaloa were used for this purpose, with 6 of them currently holding valid contracts with Pemex, the state-owned oil company which distributes all fuel retailing licenses.

Guzmán escaped from prison on July 11 using an elaborate tunnel system that stretched 1.5 kilometres underground triggering a national manhunt. However, it is not the first time Guzmán managed to break out of a prison. In 2001, after serving 8 years of his 20-year sentence, he escaped from another maximum-security Mexican prison by bribing most of the staff, including the penitentiary director.