



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
DISTRICT *of* MASSACHUSETTS

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 29, 2016

Fifty-Six Ms-13 Members Indicted

Defendants facing federal RICO conspiracy, drug trafficking, and weapons charges

BOSTON – Fifty-six alleged leaders, members, and associates of the criminal organization “La Mara Salvatrucha,” or “MS-13,” have been indicted on federal racketeering conspiracy charges, including charges related to murder, conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder, and drug trafficking. Various defendants are also charged with drug trafficking, firearm violations, immigration offenses, and fraudulent document charges.

This morning, over 400 federal, state and local law enforcement officers carried out the arrests of the numerous MS-13 leaders, members, and associates in the Boston area, including in the cities of Chelsea, East Boston, Everett, Lynn, Revere and Somerville. Fifteen of the indicted defendants were already in custody on federal, state or immigration charges.

According to court documents, in 2012, MS-13 became the first, and remains the only, street gang to be designated by the United States government as a “transnational criminal organization.” Today, MS-13 is one of the largest criminal organizations in the United States, and is an international criminal organization with over 6,000 members in the United States, with a presence in at least forty-six states and the District of Columbia, as well as over 30,000 members internationally, mostly in El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala. In Massachusetts, MS-13 is largely composed of immigrants and descendants of immigrants from El Salvador and has members operating throughout the Commonwealth, with higher concentrations in Chelsea, East Boston, Everett, Lynn, Revere, and Somerville.

Violence is a central tenet of MS-13, as evidenced by its core motto -- “mata, viola, controla,” translated as, “kill, rape, control.” During the course of this investigation, this violence was directed against rival gangs, particularly the 18th Street gang, and anyone who was perceived to have disrespected MS-13. The 18th Street gang, another criminal organization in Central America with members living in the United States, has been a longstanding rival of MS-13. MS-13 members and associates often commit murders and attempted murders using machetes, knives, and chains in order to intimidate rival gang members.

During the course of this investigation, it is alleged that MS-13 actively recruited prospective members, known as “paros,” inside local high schools from communities with significant immigrant populations from Central America, including Chelsea High School, East Boston High School and Everett High School.

Prospective members were typically 14 or 15 years old. Under the strict rules of MS-13, as communicated to the local “cliques” by the leaders of MS-13 in El Salvador, these prospective members must engage in significant violent criminal activity on behalf of the criminal organization, usually the killing of a rival gang member, in order to become a full-fledged member of MS-13, known as a “homeboy.” The indictment alleges that several of the defendants are responsible for the murders of at least five people since 2014, in Chelsea and East Boston, as well as the attempted murder of at least 14 people.

The indictment further alleges that members of the MS-13 organization in Massachusetts sell cocaine, heroin, and marijuana, and commit robberies, in order to generate income to pay monthly dues to the incarcerated leadership of MS-13 in El Salvador. This money is allegedly used to pay for weapons, cell phones, shoes, food, and other supplies for MS-13 members in and out of jail in El Salvador.

The RICO conspiracy charge provides a maximum sentence of 20 years, or life if the violation is based on racketeering activity for which the maximum penalty includes life imprisonment; three years of supervised release; and a fine of \$250,000. Depending on the drug quantity, the drug trafficking conspiracy and distribution charges provide a maximum sentence of 20 years, 40 years, or life; a minimum of three, four or five years of supervised release; and fines of \$1 million, \$5 million and \$10 million. The charge of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime provides a maximum sentence of five or seven years on and after any other sentence depending on how the firearm was used. The charge of being an alien in possession of a firearm and ammunition provides a maximum sentence of 10 years, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of illegal re-entry of a deported alien provides a maximum sentence of 10 years, three years of supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine. The transfer of false identification document charge provides a maximum sentence of 15 years, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000. The purchase of a fraudulent social security card charge provides a maximum sentence of five years, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000.

United States Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz; Harold H. Shaw, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; Matthew Etre, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Colonel Richard D. McKeon, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police made the announcement today.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office would also like to acknowledge the FBI’s North Shore Gang Task Force and the assistance and cooperation of Daniel F. Conley, Suffolk County District Attorney; Marian T. Ryan, Middlesex County District Attorney; Jonathan Blodgett, Essex County District Attorney; Boston Police Commissioner William Evans; Chief Brian A. Kyes of the Chelsea Police Department; Chief Steven A. Mazzie of the Everett Police Department; Chief Kevin Coppinger of the Lynn Police Department; Chief Joseph Cafarelli of the Revere Police Department; Chief James Fitzpatrick of the Lawrence Police Department; Chief David Fallon of the Somerville Police Department; Commissioner Carol Higgins O’Brien of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections; Sheriff Frank G. Cousins, Jr. of the Essex County Sheriff’s Department; and Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins of the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department.

The details contained in the indictments are allegations. The defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Addendum A

The following defendants are charged with one count of racketeering influenced corrupt organization (RICO) conspiracy:

1. Oscar Noe Recinos-Garcia, a/k/a “Psycho,” 22, of Somerville

2. Juilo Esau Avalos-Alvarado, a/k/a "Violento," 23, of Chelsea
3. German Hernandez-Escobar, a/k/a "Terrible," 28, of Medford
4. Noe Salvador Perez-Vasquez, a/k/a "Crazy," 25, of Somerville
5. Santos Portillo-Andrade, a/k/a "Flaco," 31, of Everett
6. Herzzon Sandoval, a/k/a "Casper," 34, of Cambridge
7. Edwin Guzman, a/k/a "Playa," 30, of East Boston
8. Jose Hernandez-Miguel, a/k/a "Muerto," 27, of East Boston
9. Edgar Pleitez, a/k/a "Cadejo," 26, of East Boston
10. Christian Alvarado, a/k/a "Catracho," 26, of Everett
11. Cesar Martinez, a/k/a "Cheche," 35, of East Boston
13. Fnu Lnu, a/k/a "Caballo," of Everett
14. Erick Argueta Larios, a/k/a "Lobo," 31, of Cambridge
15. Luis Solis-Vasquez, a/k/a "Brujo," 25, of Everett
16. Jose Miguel-Hernandez, a/k/a "Smiley," a/k/a "Danger," 20, of Somerville (Deported)
17. Carlos Melara, a/k/a "Chuchito," a/k/a "Criminal," 19, of East Boston
18. Joel Martinez, a/k/a "Animal," 20, of East Boston
19. Jose Rene Andrade, a/k/a "Triste," a/k/a "Innocente," 24, of Somerville
20. Hector Enamorado, a/k/a "Vida Loca," 37, of Chelsea
21. Henry Santos-Gomez, a/k/a "Renegado," a/k/a "Pino," 30, of Revere
22. Rafael Leoner-Aguirre, a/k/a "Tremendo," 20, of Chelsea
23. Hector Ramires, a/k/a "Cuervo," 22, of Chelsea
24. Daniel Menjivar, a/k/a "Rocoa," a/k/a "Sitiko," 19, of Chelsea
25. Angel Pineda, a/k/a "Bravo," a/k/a "Jose Lopez," 20, of Chelsea
26. Jose Vasquez, a/k/a "Little Crazy," 22, of Somerville
27. David Lopez, a/k/a "Cilindro," a/k/a "Villano," of New Jersey
28. Bryan Galicia-Barillas, a/k/a "Chucky," 18, of Chelsea
29. Domingo Tizol, a/k/a "Chapin," 21, of Chelsea
30. Fnu Lnu, a/k/a "Violento," of Arizona
31. Oscar Duran, a/k/a "Demente," 24, of East Boston

32. Edwin Gonzalez, a/k/a "Sangriento," 20, of East Boston
33. Henry Josue Parada Martinez, a/k/a "Street Danger," 20, of East Boston
34. Josue Morales, a/k/a "Gallito," 20, of Chelsea
35. Kevin Ayala, a/k/a "Blancito," 22, of Chelsea
36. Mario Aguilar Ramos, 19, of Somerville
37. Rutilio Portillo, a/k/a "Pantera," 32, of Everett
38. Edwin Diaz, a/k/a "Demente," 18, of East Boston
39. Marvin Melgar, a/k/a "Ninja" 21, of Chelsea
40. Jairo Perez, a/k/a "Seco", 24, of Chelsea
56. Jose Adan Martinez Castro, a/k/a "Chucky", 26, of Richmond, VA

Addendum B

The following defendants are charged with drug trafficking conspiracy:

41. Ramiro Guerra, a/k/a "Camello," 42, of East Boston
42. Manuel Martinez, a/k/a "Gordo," 44, East Boston or Stoneham
43. Alex Alvarenga, 42, of Saugus
44. Manuel Flores, a/k/a "Manny", 41, of East Boston
45. Heiner Yovani Gomez, a/k/a "Fiero," 31, of Chelsea
46. FNU LNU, a/k/a "The Columbian"
47. Carlos Lovato, 32, of Chelsea
48. FNU LNU, a/k/a "Migue"
49. Luis Lnu

Addendum C

The following defendants have been charged with immigration violations and/or fraudulent document charges;

50. Jose Nelsin Reyes-Velasquez, a/k/a "Diablito", 22, of Malden
51. Oscar Rivera, a/k/a "Jose", 27, of Chelsea
52. Roberto A. Lopez, of Chelsea
53. Franklin Rodriguez, a/k/a "Hollywood", 35, of Chelsea
54. Oscar Ramirez-Cornejo, a/k/a "Vago",
55. Mauricio Sanchez, a/k/a "Tigre"

57. Elenilson Gustavo Gonzalez-Gonzalez, a/k/a "Siniestro"

Component(s):

USAO - Massachusetts

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