

14 Gang Members and Associates Charged with Committing Violent Crimes in Massachusetts

Members and associates of Primeiro Comando da Massachusetts (PCM) were charged Thursday, April 25 in federal court in Boston in connection with perpetrating violent crimes in Massachusetts, including drug and firearms trafficking, robberies and kidnappings.

“Violent gangs that proliferate violence are a scourge on our communities,” said United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. “Over recent months, members and associates of Primeiro Comando da Massachusetts have been committing serious, violent crimes: brazenly robbing community businesses, dealing drugs, trafficking illegal firearms, and even kidnapping a young woman. We will not standby and allow these criminals to disrupt the safety and peace of our communities. Let today’s arrests and charges be a message to gang members and their associates: if you threaten the safety and well-being of Massachusetts residents, we will arrest and prosecute you using all of the federal resources at our disposal.”

“ATF will continue to partner with our federal, state and local law enforcement counterparts to dismantle criminal street gangs to reduce violence committed through their use of firearms,” said Kelly D. Brady, ATF Special Agent in Charge Field of the Boston Field Division. “Furthermore, it demonstrates that law enforcement will not standby and allow these criminal street gangs to get away with such acts, which creates fear for the residents within the community”

“Today’s enforcement action represents the culmination of a

long term, multi-agency investigative effort to disrupt and dismantle a violent transnational criminal organization which represents a significant threat to our public safety. Many of the defendants in this case are illegally present in the United States, and violated the rule of law with reckless abandon, conducting acts of violence, while profiting from the sale of narcotics and weapons," said Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Boston. "Together with our state, local and federal partners, the special agents of Homeland Security Investigations remain committed to using every tool available to ensure that our communities are safe and that justice is served. The fact of the matter is, the Commonwealth is a safer place with the arrests that were conducted today. We are committed to seeing this investigation through to a successful criminal prosecution."

The following defendants were charged today.

- Marcio Costa, a/k/a "Marcino" and "Marcinn," 28, of Malden, is the alleged leader of PCM and was arrested and charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to commit robbery, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license;
- Joao Pedro Marques Guimares Gama, a/k/a "Bahianinho," 21, a Brazilian national illegally residing in Malden, was arrested and charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to commit robbery, engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license, and being an alien in possession of a firearm;
- Breno Henrique DaSilva, 20, a Brazilian national illegally residing in Somerville, was arrested and charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to commit robbery, and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances;
- Alvaro Dos Santos Melo, 22, a Brazilian national illegally residing in Everett, was arrested and charged with RICO

conspiracy, conspiracy to commit robbery, and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances;

- Edson DaSilva, 19, previously resided in Whitman and is currently in state custody on kidnapping and firearms charges, and was federally charged with RICO conspiracy and robbery;
- Igor Costa, 20, previously resided in Framingham and is currently in state custody, and was federally charged with RICO conspiracy and robbery;
- Vinicius Goncalves de Assis, previously resided in Revere and is currently in state custody, and was federally charged with RICO conspiracy;
- Rodrigo Tevares, 19, a Brazilian nation illegally residing in Stoughton, was arrested and charged with being an alien in possession of a firearm and engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license;
- Rony DaFreitas, 21, of Lowell, was arrested and charged with engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license;
- Elwood Cortes-Navedo, 23, of Lowell, was arrested and charged with engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license;
- Fernando DeOliveira, 24, a Brazilian nation illegally residing in Brighton, was arrested and charged with being an alien in possession of a firearm and engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license;
- Mouad Nessassi, 21, of Boston, was arrested and charged with engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license, distribution of 28 grams or more of cocaine base, and possession of an unregistered firearm;
- Fadwa Chimal, 19, was arrested and charged with engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license; and
- Jennifer Romero, 26, of Chelsea, was charged with engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license and distribution of 28 grams or more of cocaine base.

According to court documents, in September 2018, federal, state and local law enforcement began investigating members

and associates of PCM, a gang with Brazilian origins, which first appeared in Massachusetts approximately two years ago. It is alleged that members and associates of PCM are actively involved in violent crimes including the illegal sale of firearms, drug trafficking, robberies, kidnappings and armed assaults in numerous communities in Massachusetts, including Boston, Malden, Everett, Somerville, Framingham, and Peabody, among others. During the investigation, law enforcement seized 31 firearms, including 27 handguns, two sawed-off shotguns, one shotgun, one rifle and several hundred rounds of ammunition.

The defendants allegedly committed various criminal offenses, some of which they admitted to cooperating witnesses. For example, Gama told cooperating witnesses that PCM not only committed robberies in Massachusetts, but also had targeted and robbed a drug dealer and his family in Connecticut. Gama stated that during the robbery, he held a gun to the head of the dealer's daughter. In addition, during the investigation, Costa allegedly discussed a planned armed robbery with an undercover federal agent and repeatedly stated that it was likely that the gang members/associates would commit murder as part of the robbery.

Additional robberies alleged by the court documents include: an Oct. 18, 2018, armed robbery of a market in Boston committed by Goncalves; a Dec. 9, 2018, armed robbery of a pizza delivery person in Everett committed by DaSilva; and a Jan. 17, 2019, armed robbery of a gas station in Weymouth committed by Igor Costa. In addition, on Feb. 7, 2019, DaSilva and Henrique were involved in the kidnapping of a young woman who they believed could help them target a rival gang member. DaSilva and Henrique lured the young woman out of a residence in Peabody and eventually took her to a residence in Maynard where she was held at gunpoint and threatened. A cooperating witness alerted law enforcement, who responded to the scene and eventually arrested DaSilva.

On numerous occasions in 2018 and 2019, it is alleged that the defendants illegally sold firearms and drugs to cooperating witnesses.

In addition to the 14 charged criminally, four individuals were arrested administratively by ICE today.

The charge of racketeering conspiracy provides for a sentence of no greater than 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater, and restitution. The charge of conspiracy to commit robbery and robbery provides for a sentence of no greater than 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of \$250,000 and restitution. The charge of conspiracy to distribute controlled substances provides for a sentence of no greater than 20 years in prison, at least three years up to life supervised release, and a fine of \$1 million. The charge of engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license provides for a sentence of no greater than five years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of being an alien in possession of a firearm provides for a sentence of no greater than 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of distribution of 28 grams or more of cocaine base provides for a sentence of at least five and up to 40 years in prison, at least four up to life supervised release, and a fine of \$2,000,000. The charge of possession of an unregistered firearm provides for a sentence of no greater than 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$10,000. Defendants illegally present in the U.S. will be subject to deportation proceedings. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

U.S. Attorney Lelling, ATF SAC Brady; HSI SAC Fitzhugh; and Colonel Kerry A. Gilpin, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police, made the announcement today. The Chelsea,

Lowell, Malden, Marlborough, Somerville, and Weymouth Police Departments and the Middlesex Sheriff's Office provided assistance with the investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys in Lelling's Organized Crime and Gang Unit.

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