

Massachusetts Latin Kings associate pleads guilty to firearms offense

Defendant provided AK-47 style rifle and 49 rounds of ammunition to cooperator.

“An associate of the Massachusetts Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (Latin Kings) pleaded guilty today to firearm and ammunition charges.

Derek Southworth, 34, of Fitchburg, pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. U.S. Senior District Court Judge Rya W. Zobel scheduled sentencing for May 19, 2022.

On April 18, 2017, Southworth provided an AK-47 style rifle and approximately 49 rounds of ammunition to a cooperating witness. The transaction was captured on audio-video recording. Due to a prior conviction, Southworth is prohibited from possessing firearms and ammunition.

The Latin Kings are a violent criminal enterprise comprised of thousands of members across the United States. The Latin Kings adhere to a national manifesto, employ an internal judiciary and use a sophisticated system of communication to maintain the hierarchy of the organization. As alleged in court documents, the gang uses drug distribution to generate revenue, and engages in violence against witnesses and rival gangs to further its influence and to protect its turf.

In December 2019, a federal grand jury returned an indictment alleging racketeering conspiracy, drug conspiracy and firearms charges against dozens of leaders, members and associates of the Latin Kings. Southworth is the 56th defendant to plead guilty in the case.

The charge of being a felon in possession of firearms and ammunition provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; Commissioner Carol Mici of the Massachusetts Department of Correction; and New Bedford Police Chief Joseph C. Cordeiro made the announcement. Valuable assistance was also provided by the FBI North Shore Gang Task Force and the Bristol County and Suffolk County District Attorney's Offices. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Philip A. Mallard and Lauren Graber of the Organized Crime & Gang Unit are prosecuting the case.

This effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

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