

Massachusetts MS-13 Leader Sentenced to 19 Years in Prison

A leader of MS-13's Enfermos Criminales Salvatrucha clique was sentenced Monday in federal court in Boston.

Rafael Leoner Aguirre, a/k/a "Tremendo," 22, a Salvadoran national, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV to 19 years in prison and three years of supervised release, which he will begin serving after completion of the state prison sentence for which he is currently incarcerated. Leoner Aguirre will also be subject to deportation upon the completion of his federal sentence. In November 2017, Leoner Aguirre was convicted by a federal jury after a multi-week trial of conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity, more commonly referred to as RICO conspiracy.

Leoner Aguirre was the leader of MS-13's Enfermos Criminales Salvatrucha clique. In 2013, Leoner Aguirre entered the United States illegally from El Salvador and initially moved to Michigan. From there, he began recruiting and planning MS-13 activities impacting Massachusetts. Among other things, Leoner Aguirre created recruitment videos for MS-13 and posted them on YouTube. This enabled younger gang members and associates to view these videos, including one witness who testified that he first saw these videos while at a local high school in Massachusetts.

In March 2014, Leoner Aguirre moved to the Chelsea area and immediately began activating, organizing, and supervising the Enfermos clique. As part of that activity, Leoner Aguirre encouraged members of the clique to attack and kill rival gang members, in addition to committing other racketeering acts

such as robberies. Leoner Aguirre himself committed a number of racketeering acts, including an attempted murder in Chelsea where Leoner Aguirre struck a victim in the head with a machete. Leoner Aguirre also committed an attempted murder involving a shooting, which is the incident for which he is currently serving a four-to-five year state prison sentence. Leoner Aguirre committed both of these attempted murders in daylight on busy public streets in Chelsea.

The other members and associates of the Enfermos clique were Hector Ramires, a/k/a "Cuervo;" Bryan Galicia Barillas, a/k/a "Chucky;" David Lopez, a/k/a "Cilindro," a/k/a "Villano;" Daniel Menjivar, a/k/a "Roca," a/k/a "Sitiko;" Angel Pineda, a/k/a "Bravo;" and Kevin Ayala, a/k/a "Gallito." Each of these defendants has pleaded guilty and will be subject to deportation upon the completion of their sentences.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Harold H. Shaw, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; Michael Shea, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Colonel Kerry A. Gilpin, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police; Commissioner Thomas Turco of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections; Essex County Sheriff Kevin F. Coppinger; Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Thompkins; Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel F. Conley; Middlesex County District Attorney Marian T. Ryan; Essex County District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett; Boston Police Commissioner William Evans; Chelsea Police Chief Brian A. Kyes; Everett Police Chief Steven A. Mazzie; Lynn Police Chief Michael Mageary; Revere Police Chief James Guido; and Somerville Police Chief David Fallon made the announcement.