

Massachusetts MS-13 Leader Sentenced to 212 Months in Prison for Racketeering Conspiracy

An MS-13 leader was sentenced today in federal court in Boston for racketeering conspiracy.

Jose Vasquez, a/k/a "Little Crazy," 24, of Somerville, was sentenced to 212 months in federal prison and three years of supervised release. In May 2018, Vasquez pleaded guilty to conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity, more commonly referred to as RICO or racketeering conspiracy.

Vasquez was a member and local leader of the Trece Locos Salvatrucha, or TLS, clique of MS-13. In addition to being a leader of an MS-13 clique, Vasquez personally participated in racketeering activity and acts of violence on behalf of MS-13. Among other things, on Sept. 8, 2014, Vasquez and another MS-13 member, Angel Pineda, a/k/a "Bravo," were involved in an attempted murder of a 16-year-old suspected gang rival. During the incident, which occurred on a public street in Chelsea in the middle of the afternoon, Pineda stabbed the victim multiple times. Vasquez, carrying a machete, also attempted to stab and kill the victim, but Vasquez's machete got stuck in its sheath. The victim survived after receiving life-saving medical care.

In a separate incident, Vasquez assisted other MS-13 members in burying evidence relating to a murder in East Boston in January 2016. On Jan. 10, 2016, MS-13 members Edwin Gonzalez, a/k/a "Sangriento," Edwin Diaz, a/k/a "Demente," Jairo Perez, a/k/a "Seco," and Rigoberto Mejia, a/k/a "Ninja," murdered a

16-year-old boy who the gang also believed was a rival gang member. Gonzalez, Diaz, and Perez stabbed the victim multiple times while Mejia shot the victim multiple times. This incident occurred on a public street in East Boston and the victim died on the scene. A few days after the boy's death, Vasquez—who did not participate in the murder—helped Perez bury the knives used in the killing, as well as the bloody clothes worn by those who committed the murder. The evidence was later recovered by law enforcement.

After a multi-year investigation, Vasquez was one of dozens of leaders, members, and associates of MS-13 named in a superseding indictment unsealed in January 2016 that targeted MS-13's criminal activities in Massachusetts. According to court documents, MS-13 members in Massachusetts engaged in a variety of racketeering acts and crimes of violence, including six different murders between October 2014 and January 2016.

Vasquez is one of 49 defendants who have been convicted as part of this ongoing prosecution, and 16 of those defendants have been held responsible for murder. 40 of the 49 convictions, including Vasquez, were the result of guilty pleas prior to trial. Nine other defendants were convicted after trial.

All the defendants involved in the attempted murder or murder that Vasquez assisted with have been convicted. Diaz, who participated in the murder, was sentenced to 35 years in prison, and Pineda, who participated in the attempted murder, was sentenced to 93 months in prison. Gonzalez, Perez, and Mejia await sentencing.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Harold H. Shaw, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; Peter C. Fitzhugh, 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 Gross; 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 today.