

# **MS-13 member pleads guilty to RICO conspiracy involving murder of 15-year old**

An MS-13 member pleaded guilty Friday, January 12, in federal court in Boston to racketeering conspiracy involving the murder of a 15-year-old boy in Lawrence.

Josue Alexis DePaz, a/k/a "Gato," 21, a Salvadoran national formerly residing in Lawrence, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity, more commonly referred to as RICO conspiracy. U.S. District Court Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV scheduled sentencing for April 6, 2018.

DePaz was identified as a member of MS-13's Everett Loco Salvatrucha (ELS) clique, which operated in the greater Boston area. When interviewed by law enforcement officers, DePaz admitted that on July 5, 2015, he was one of two men who stabbed a 15-year-old boy to death in O'Connell Park in Lawrence. In conversations recorded by law enforcement during the investigation, MS-13 members identified DePaz as one of the men who murdered the victim. DePaz was subsequently arrested in a house in Somerville with several other MS-13 members. A search warrant at the house resulted in the recovery of a firearm, several large knives, photographs of MS-13 members flashing gang signs, and a large volume of MS-13 paraphernalia, including blue and white hats, bandanas and rosary beads. According to court documents, MS-13 members frequently wear blue and white items of clothing to signify their membership in the gang.

After a three-year investigation, DePaz was one of 61 individuals named in a superseding indictment targeting the criminal activities of alleged leaders, members, and

associates of MS-13 in Massachusetts. DePaz is the 28th defendant to plead guilty in this case.

DePaz faces up to life in prison, five years of supervised release, and will be subject to deportation upon the completion of his sentence. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.