

Beat: News

33 Members of Violent Gang Charged With Drug Trafficking and Firearms Violations

In Fajardo, Puerto Rico

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USPA NEWS - On July 20, 2022, a federal grand jury in the District of Puerto Rico returned an indictment charging 33 violent gang members from the municipality of Fajardo with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, possession and distribution of controlled substances, and firearms violations, announced W. Stephen Muldrow, United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Puerto Rico Police Bureau (PRPB)- Fajardo Strike Force- were in charge of the investigation of the case, with the collaboration of Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations (ICE HSI).

The indictment alleges that from 2016 to the date of the return of the indictment, the drug trafficking organization distributed heroin, cocaine base (commonly known as "crack"), cocaine, and marijuana within 1,000 feet of the Pedro Rosario Nieves Public Housing Project, and other areas nearby. The object of the conspiracy was to operate a drug-trafficking organization to distribute controlled substances in many areas in the municipality of Fajardo for significant financial profit.

The main leader of the drug trafficking organization, Michael G. Molina-Quiñones, a/k/a Maicol/La M", led the operations from outside the housing project. He communicated with other members of the organization and gave them instructions and orders on how to handle the operations. Molina-Quiñones also ordered acts of intimidation, force, and violence to maintain control of the operations, intimidate rival gangs, and discipline members of the organization.

As part of the conspiracy, the co-conspirators used apartments in the public housing project and other areas in several municipalities to prepare the drugs for distribution at the drug points.

The defendants acted in different roles in order to further the goals of their organization, to wit: leaders/suppliers, enforcers, runners, sellers, lookouts, and facilitators. Twenty-five defendants are facing one charge of possession of firearms in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. The defendants charged in the indictment are:

Michael G. Molina-Quiñones, a/k/a "Maicol/La M"
Xavier Edgardo González-Rivera, a/k/a "Código"
Luis Joel Nieves-Ciarez, a/k/a "Popeye"
Aramis Suárez-García, a/k/a "Blanco Perla"
Manuel Cruz-Chico, a/k/a "Gongi"
Christian Cardona-Hernández, a/k/a "Pichingay"
Raúl Quiñones-Boria, a/k/a "Bebo Grande"
José Enriquez-Ciarez, a/k/a "Cheo"
Frank Luis Quiñones-Boria, a/k/a "Real G"
Alex Carrasquillo-Rosado, a/k/a "Boca"
Belmarie Nieves-Ciarez
José Pabón-Agosto, a/k/a "El Popo/Popola/Menor/Yeti"
José Esteban Rivera-Tolentino, a/k/a "Kiki"
Héctor Omar Hernández-Tolentino, a/k/a "Omy"
Jeziel Rodríguez-Cabral, a/k/a "Superman"
Anjofer A. Escobar-Aponte, a/k/a "Yoyo"
Carlos Alexis Serrano-Vega, a/k/a "Peluca"

Eliezer De La Paz-Cruz, a/k/a "Pocoyo/El Eliot"
Juan Gabriel Cruz-Torréns, a/k/a "Nurio/Negro"
Edwin Lemuel Marcano-Ferrer, a/k/a "Lele"

Manuel O. Robles-Osorio, a/k/a "Bota"
Juan Ramón Cortijo-Meléndez, a/k/a "Golo"
Alexander Rodríguez-Luna, a/k/a "Ale/Alex"
Iván Javier Ginés-Negrón, a/k/a "Gordo"
Julio L. Torres-Vázquez, a/k/a "Tito"
Marcelino Salcedo-Ayuso
Raymond Cruz-Medina
Héctor A. Laureano-Cruz, a/k/a "Rastrillo"
Alejandro Rivera-Molina, a/k/a "Tempo/Gringo"
Carlos Silva-Meléndez, a/k/a "Pinpin"
Anthony Adonays Centeno-Félix, a/k/a "Troco/Broco"
Kiara Michelle Méndez-Carrasco, a/k/a "La Dura"
Yarlin Torres-Rodríguez, a/k/a "Yailin"

Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) and Chief of the Gang Section Alberto López-Rocafort, Deputy Chief of the Gang Section, AUSA Teresa Zapata-Valladares, AUSAs Corinne Cordero-Romo and Joseph Russell, and Special AUSA R. Vance Eaton are in charge of the prosecution of the case. If convicted on the drug charges, the defendants face a minimum sentence of 10 years, and up to life in prison. If convicted of both the drug and firearms charges, the defendants face a minimum sentence of 15 years, and up to life in prison.

This prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations.

An indictment is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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