



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
Northern District of Illinois*

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*Patrick J. Fitzgerald  
United States Attorney*

*Federal Building  
219 South Dearborn Street, 5th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60604  
(312) 353-5300*

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**PRESS CONTACTS:**  
AUSA Andrew Porter (312) 353-5358  
AUSA Nancy DePodesta (312) 353-4224  
AUSA Tinos Diamantatos (312) 353-4317  
AUSA/PIO Randall Samborn (312) 353-5318

**“CORONA” AUGUSTIN ZAMBRANO AMONG 18 ALLEGED LATIN KINGS GANG LEADERS IN LITTLE VILLAGE REGION INDICTED ON FEDERAL CHARGES**

CHICAGO – A Chicago man alleged to be a “Corona” of the Latin Kings, making him the highest-ranking leader outside of prison and responsible for overseeing the illegal activities of all factions of the powerful Chicago street gang, is among 18 defendants charged in a sweeping new federal indictment against the gang’s alleged hierarchy. **Augustin Zambrano**, the alleged leader of the Almighty Latin King Nation in the Chicago area and particularly on the city’s south side, and 14 other alleged leaders of the 26<sup>th</sup> Street Region of the Latin Kings were charged with racketeering conspiracy for allegedly running a criminal enterprise to enrich themselves and others through drug-trafficking and preserving and protecting their power, territory and revenue through acts of murder, attempted murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, extortion, and other acts of violence. All 18 defendants — six newly charged and 12 who were initially indicted a year ago — were charged in a 48-count superseding indictment returned by a federal grand jury yesterday.

Among the new charges, the indictment alleges that Zambrano and co-defendants **Vicente Garcia, Fernando King, Samuel Gutierrez** and **Felipe Zamora** conspired to demand and receive payment from an organization illegally selling fraudulent immigration documents in the “Little

Village” area of Chicago by threatening and actually engaging in the use of force and violence against members of that organization unless the defendants received regular cash payments. This is the first time that federal charges have alleged that Latin Kings leaders extorted “street tax” from non-gang members, referred to as “miqueros,” who sold false identification documents.

To enforce the Latin Kings’ grip on the community and control over its members and associates, defendants charged in the racketeering conspiracy (RICO) count allegedly kept victims in fear of the gang and its leaders by enforcing what it referred to as an “SOS” — or shoot on sight — order against Latin King members who cooperated with law enforcement.

Zambrano, 49, also known as “Big Tino,” “Tino,” “Old Man,” and “Viejo,” was arrested Monday night on a charge of conspiracy to possess and distribute tablets containing hydrocodone that was lodged in a criminal complaint. He appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Arlander Keys on Tuesday and was ordered held pending a detention hearing at 10 a.m. tomorrow. Three other new defendants — **Ruben Caquias**, **Ernesto Grimaldo** and **Felipe Zamora** — were arrested early today or were being sought and those arrested were scheduled to appear this afternoon before Magistrate Judge Maria Valdez. Other defendants who were charged previously are scheduled to be arraigned at 10 a.m. Tuesday before U.S. District Judge Charles Norgle in U.S. District Court.

The arrests and charges were announced by Gary S. Shapiro, First Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Andrew L. Traver, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Gary Hartwig, Special Agent-in-Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Chicago, and Jody P. Weis, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department. The investigation was conducted with the

assistance of the federal High Intensity Drug-Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force and under the umbrella of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

Today's indictment replaces the charges that were brought in September 2008 against 25 alleged Latin Kings leaders, including Garcia, then the Regional Officer or top leader of the 26<sup>th</sup> Street Region, a regional enforcer and 18 Incas (section leaders), who were charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute cocaine in *United States v. Vicente Garcia, et al.*, 08 CR 746. Since then, 13 of those defendants have pleaded guilty and all are named as co-conspirators in the new indictment. The remaining 12 defendants are facing the same and, in some cases, additional charges in the new indictment. They are: **Vicente Garcia, Valentin Baez, Alphonso Chavez, Juan DeJesus, Danny Dominguez, Luis Garcia, Samuel Gutierrez, Jose Guzman, Polin Lopez, Javier Ramirez, Wilfredo Rivera, Jr., and Fernando Vazquez.** Of these defendants, Vicente Garcia, Chavez, DeJesus, Luis Garcia, Guzman and Rivera are in federal custody; Gutierrez, Lopez and Ramirez are on bond; and Baez, Dominguez and Vazquez are fugitives. The new defendants are **Zambrano, Fernando King**, 39, of Chicago, alleged to be the gang's "Supreme Regional Officer" who reported only to Zambrano, and **Ruben Caquias, Ernesto Grimaldo, Nedal Issa and Felipe Zamora.** King and Issa are also in federal custody.

The indictment includes the previous charges alleging that the 12 remaining original defendants, many of them leaders of the 24 sections that comprised the 26<sup>th</sup> Street Region, conspired in late 2007 to sell a quarter-ounce of powder cocaine twice a month to fund the "Nation Box," a kitty that the regional hierarchy used to purchase weapons, narcotics, and pay for funeral and attorney fees for fellow gang members. Located along 26<sup>th</sup> Street, a main east-west thoroughfare, the region is bounded roughly by Fairfield Avenue (east) to Millard Avenue (west), and 21<sup>st</sup> Street (north) to 33<sup>rd</sup>

Street (south). The region's 24 sections are typically named after a street or intersection, with each section having its own leadership and "soldiers," ranging between approximately 12 to 80 individuals, according to the indictment.

The racketeering conspiracy count charges 15 of the defendants with engaging in pattern of illegal activity since 2000, including drug trafficking, extortion, obstruction of justice, witness tampering, murder, attempted murder, and solicitation to commit murder, and intimidation. No specific murders are alleged in the indictment but it does allege assault with a dangerous weapon or attempted murder of at least five unnamed victims. As part of the racketeering conspiracy, defendants and their associates allegedly:

- ▶ conducted the gang's affairs through a series of laws and policies, some of which were codified in a constitution and a series of laws. The rules included a three-page list of 25 rules establishing procedures for homicides, "security," and the sale of counterfeit identification documents;
- ▶ attended regular meetings, known as "demos" – or, when held by Nation officers, "Nation demos" – at which they discussed, planned, and otherwise engaged in criminal activity, including murder, attempted murder, narcotics distribution, and obstruction of justice;
- ▶ initiated members by causing them to endure physical assaults conducted by other members at various gang-related gatherings;
- ▶ engaged in a system of "violations" in which they and others enforced discipline and the rules by attempting murder, conspiring to murder, physically beating and threatening those members who violated rules, questioned authority, or posed a threat to the leaders or purposes of the gang;
- ▶ committed illegal acts known as "burns," including murder, attempted murder, aggravated battery, intimidation, and assault against individuals who posed a threat to the gang or jeopardized its operations, including rival gang members and witnesses to illegal activities. Latin Kings members and associates were required to participate in such "burns," received standing orders to shoot rival gang members, and were instructed to retaliate for gang-related attacks upon fellow members and associates;

- ▶ managed the procurement, transfer, use, concealment, and disposal of firearms and dangerous weapons to protect gang-related territory, personnel, and operations, and to deter, eliminate, and retaliate against competitors and other rival gangs and individuals;
- ▶ monitored law enforcement radio frequencies to detect and avoid law enforcement inquiry into their activities, including during gang-related missions;
- ▶ acquired automobiles, which were known by several names, including “rammers,” to use them during missions against rival gangs;
- ▶ earned money for their members and regularly financed their activities through funds obtained in the illegal trafficking of narcotics, including the possession and distribution of cocaine and marijuana; and
- ▶ operated a “Box” system in which section and region leaders and others controlled and maintained a stash of money for the gang. Gang members and associates paid required monthly dues into the Box which, in turn, the gang used to bail its members out of jail, to send money to incarcerated members, and to purchase and sell firearms and controlled substances. Members their associates at times paid money into the “Box” by selling narcotics supplied by Nation-level members of the gang.

The charges result from a sustained, coordinated investigation by multiple federal law enforcement agencies, working together with the Chicago Police Department and other state and local partners, to dismantle the hierarchy of the Latin Kings and other highly-organized, often violent, drug-trafficking Chicago street gangs. In late 2006, ATF agents led an investigation that resulted in federal drug trafficking and firearms charges against 38 Latin Kings members and associates. Last year, the FBI led an investigation that resulted in state and federal charges against 40 Latin Kings members and associates, including the 12 who were charged in the new superseding indictment. The six new defendants brings the total charged to more than 80 in the last three years, and approximately 50 of the 60-plus defendants charged federally have been convicted.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew Porter, Nancy DePodesta and Tinos Diamantatos.

If convicted, the counts and maximum penalties for each in the indictment are as follows: racketeering conspiracy (Count One) — 20 years in prison; assault with a dangerous weapon (Counts Two, Four, Six and Nine) — 20 years in prison; carrying a firearm during a violent crime (Counts Three, Five and Eight) — mandatory minimum 5 years in prison to a maximum of life; attempted murder (Count Seven) — 10 years in prison; extortion (Count 10) — 20 years in prison; conspiracy to possess and distribute 500 grams or more of powder cocaine (Count 11) — mandatory minimum 5 years to a maximum of 40 years and a \$2 million fine; conspiracy to possess and distribute 50 grams or more of crack cocaine (Count 12) — mandatory minimum 10 years in prison to a maximum of life and a \$4 million fine; distribution of 5 or more grams of crack (Count 13) — mandatory minimum 5 years in prison to a maximum of 40 years and a \$2 million fine; and distribution of powder cocaine (Counts 14-48) — 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. Each count also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000 unless otherwise noted. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

An indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

A list of all 18 defendants, their alleged rank in the Latin Kings and their arrest status is attached.

*Note: All defendants reside in Chicago unless otherwise listed ...*

**Augustin Zambrano, 49, aka “Big Tino,” “Tino,” “Old Man,” and “Viejo,” Corona, in custody;**

**Vicente Garcia, 31, of Bolingbrook, aka, “DK,” Supreme Regional Officer, in custody;**

**Valentin Baez, 23, aka “Baby 24,” “Valentin Biez,” Casique, fugitive;**

**Ruben Caquias, 28, aka “Flaco,” Regional Enforcer, arrested today;**

**Alphonso Chavez, 24, aka “Ponch,” Inca, in custody;**

**Juan DeJesus, 25, aka “Baby 28,” Inca, in custody;**

**Danny Dominguez, 24, aka “Baby Trigger,” “Baby T,” Inca, fugitive;**

**Luis Garcia, 33, aka “Wild,” “Jose Campos,” Inca, in custody;**

**Ernesto Grimaldo, aka “Travisio,” arrested today;**

**Samuel Gutierrez, 25, aka “Wedo,” Inca, on bond;**

**Jose Guzman, 32, aka “Boo Boo,” Regional Enforcer, in custody;**

**Nedal Issa, 32, aka “Lucky,” Inca, in custody;**

**Fernando King, 39, aka “Ace,” “Pops,” Supreme Regional Officer, in custody;**

**Polin Lopez, 24, aka “Baby 23,” Inca, on bond;**

**Javier Ramirez, 28, aka “Convict,” Inca, on bond;**

**Wilfredo Rivera, Jr., 34, of Romeoville, aka “Boy,” Inca, in custody;**

**Fernando Vazquez, 26, aka “Pac Man,” Inca, fugitive;**

**Felipe Zamora, 27, aka “Dough Boy,” Regional Officer, arrest warrant issued;**

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