

U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

As I have previously observed in this space, one of the most important functions of this office is to prosecute violent drug traffickers associated with organized crime groups. One of the most violent criminal enterprises in the Eastern District of California is the Nuestra Familia, a prison-based organization that controls numerous street-level Norteño gang members involved in drug trafficking in the Central Valley. The Nuestra Familia and its Norteño affiliates have a history of extreme violence – against rival drug dealers, against those who cooperate with law enforcement, against former members who attempt to withdraw from the organization, and against those members who violate its rules or offend its leaders. Much of the violence in towns up and down the Central Valley can be traced to the criminal activities of the NF and its affiliates.

Over the last several years, working together with our federal, state and local law enforcement allies, we have been collectively targeting the Nuestra Familia. While the NF is a well-entrenched and resilient organization, our recent prosecutions have done serious damage to it. In May I announced that the last of 38 NF leaders and associates in a major case pending in federal court in Fresno had been sentenced to prison. In two other Fresno cases targeting NF associates, seven more were sentenced to prison. In three other recent or pending cases in federal court in Sacramento, 25 more NF leaders and associates have been sentenced to prison so far. Of those sentenced to date in these cases, 46 have received sentences of ten years or more in prison, and about half of those have received sentences of between 20 and 40 years. All of these defendants will be required by federal law to serve at least 85% of their prison terms, and that time will be served in federal prisons across the country, often far away from their confederates in this region.

Our efforts to dismantle the Nuestra Familia are continuing, and are active. Several more NF defendants will be sentenced this month and over the next few months in Sacramento. In Fresno, working with the FBI, we recently indicted three new NF defendants in a racketeering case involving a series of brutal prison assaults.

A year ago, the U.S. Attorney General announced the Smart on Crime Initiative – an initiative which involves focusing federal prosecutive resources on the most violent criminals. It is defendants like these, who pose a serious risk to public safety, who deserve the full weight of the federal justice system.

The battle against NF will likely continue for some years, and it would be foolish to declare victory now. But by teaming up with federal, state and local law enforcement in this district, we have collectively made huge progress in degrading the organization and removing many of its leaders.

If you would like to communicate with our office, contact the main number in Sacramento, or submit a suggestion by clicking on the button below. Thank you.

United States Attorney

Benjamin B. Wagner