

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES
ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

MEXICAN MAFIA MEMBER SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - May 29, 2009

Salvador Perez was sentenced today to a term of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole by United States District Judge Dana M. Sabraw, announced United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt. Perez was sentenced based upon his October 3, 2007, guilty plea to participating in a racketeering influenced corrupt organization (RICO) conspiracy involving the Mexican Mafia, aka "La Eme," prison/street gang. In his guilty plea, Perez admitted to participating in the June 2002 murder of Jabila Barragan. Perez also admitted that the Mexican Mafia racketeering organization is involved in a wide range of criminal activities, including: murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to import and distribute controlled substances, conspiracy to interfere with commerce through threats of violence, conspiracy to launder drug proceeds and robbery. Perez further acknowledged the manner in which the Mexican Mafia is able to exert control over illegal activities, both within the prison system and on the streets of Southern California, is through its connection to various Hispanic street gangs in San Diego.

The RICO conspiracy charge to which the defendant pled guilty stemmed from a long-term investigation conducted by the multi-agency San Diego Violent Crimes Task Force-Gang Group and North County Regional Gang Task Force, which targeted the criminal activities of Hispanic street gangs with ties to the Mexican Mafia, or “La Eme.” A total of thirty-five defendants were arrested and prosecuted in federal court based upon the investigation. All thirty-five defendants have now been successfully prosecuted and defendant Perez is the last to be sentenced.

United States Attorney Hewitt commented, “The criminal impact the Mexican Mafia has on our community is profound - their members and associates are involved in violent crimes and significant drug-related activities. The utilization of the federal RICO conspiracy statute ensured that the Government was able to hold the defendants accountable for the full scope of their criminal activities, including violent crimes traditionally prosecuted in state court. Including the life sentence imposed today, the U.S. Attorney’s Office has successfully sought and received a total of eleven life sentences for defendants arrested in connection with this investigation.”

FBI Special Agent in Charge Keith Slotter commented, “Today's sentencing marks the end of a long investigation where the efforts of all levels of law enforcement in San Diego come to a proper administration of justice. While the citizens of San Diego are safer because of these incarcerations, there are still many out there who threaten our communities with violence and other criminal activity. We remain committed to pursuing them and protecting this community.”

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 06cr1243-DMS

Salvador Perez

SUMMARY OF CHARGE

Title 18, United States Code, Section 1962(d) - Conspiracy to Conduct Enterprise Affairs
Through a Pattern of Racketeering Activity