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**LATIN KINGS' NATIONWIDE LEADER, AUGUSTIN ZAMBRANO SENTENCED TO 60 YEARS IN PRISON FOR RICO CONSPIRACY AND RELATED GANG CRIMES**

CHICAGO — The highest-ranking leader nationwide of the Latin Kings street gang was sentenced today to 60 years in federal prison, the statutory maximum, after being convicted at trial last April of racketeering conspiracy (RICO) and related charges involving narcotics trafficking and violence that plagued numerous neighborhoods on the city's north, south and west sides.. The defendant, **Augustin Zambrano**, 51, a "Corona" of the Almighty Latin King Nation, who was responsible for overseeing the illegal activities of all factions of the powerful street gang with some 10,000 members in Illinois alone, has been in federal custody since 2009 and must serve at least 85 percent of his sentence.

In imposing the sentence, U.S. District Judge Charles Norgle cited Zambrano's extensive criminal record of violent offenses and his lack whatsoever of any acceptance of responsibility or remorse for victims.

Zambrano, also known as "Big Tino," "Tino," "Old Man," and "Viejo," and three co-defendants were found guilty of 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.

“This investigation has held the leaders of the Latin Kings like Zambrano responsible for their iron-fisted leadership of a criminal enterprise responsible for murders and attempted murders. As the CEO of this gang, Zambrano bears responsibility for its criminal acts,” said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

In urging the maximum sentence, prosecutors wrote in a court filing:

“Zambrano chose violence at every turn. The message he sent out through his words and actions was that violence was the only path that mattered. He did so personally and through his appointment of trusted lieutenants such as Fernando King and Vicente Garcia, who were responsible through their stewardship for murder, attempted murder, shootings, beatings, and other acts of violence. Zambrano did not carry out any of this violence by himself. He was insulated. He was behind the scenes. He entrusted others to do it. He put leaders in place who shared his vision . . . to see to it that that Latin Kings acted barbarically. The result was an organization with its own rules, its own laws, and a savage code of violence. In many cases, the soldiers for whom defendant and the other leaders of the Latin Kings are responsible were simply boys who killed or were killed.”

Three co-defendants were convicted with Zambrano at trial of RICO conspiracy and other crimes. Jose Guzman, a former “Nation Enforcer” in the 26th Street, or Little Village, faction, was sentenced last month to 35 years in prison. Awaiting sentencing are Vicente Garcia, the “Supreme Regional Inca,” who was in charge of all Latin Kings in Illinois, and Alphonso Chavez, the “Inca,” or leader of the gang’s 31<sup>st</sup> and Drake faction. Fernando “Ace” King, who preceded Garcia as Supreme Regional Inca and pleaded guilty, was sentenced last October to 40 years in prison.

Evidence at trial included audio and video recordings of three beatings inflicted upon gang members for violating the rules and testimony documenting 20 shootings in the Little Village area, including at least one in which the victim died. Zambrano and Garcia were both convicted of assault with a dangerous weapon.

The four trial defendants were among a total of 31 co-defendants who were indicted in September 2008 or charged in a superseding indictment in October 2009. Of those 31 defendants, 24 pleaded guilty, four were convicted at trial, and three remain fugitives. From its origin and base in the west side Little Village community, the Latin Kings spread throughout Chicago and Illinois and established branches in other states, where local leaders acted with some autonomy but adhered to the rules and hierarchy of the Chicago gang, according to the evidence in the five-week federal trial.

The RICO conspiracy count included evidence that Zambrano and several co-defendants conspired to demand and receive payment from an organization illegally selling fraudulent immigration documents in Little Village by threatening, and actually engaging in, the use of force and violence against members of that organization unless the defendants received regular cash payments. Trial evidence proved federal charges that Latin Kings leaders extorted “street tax” from non-gang members, referred to as “miqueros,” who sold false identification documents.

As part of the RICO conspiracy, evidence also showed that defendants kept victims in fear of the gang and its leaders by enforcing what it referred to as an “SOS” — shoot on sight or smash on sight — order against Latin King members who cooperated with law enforcement in order to enforce the gang’s grip on the community and control over its members and associates.

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the sentence with Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Andrew L. Traver, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The Chicago Police Department, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Chicago, and the Cook County Sheriff’s Police also had

significant roles in the investigation, which was conducted through the federal High Intensity Drug-Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force and under the umbrella of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

The convictions resulted from sustained, coordinated investigations 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. In 2008, the FBI led an investigation that resulted in state and federal charges against 40 Latin Kings members and associates, including a dozen of the Zambrano co-defendants. In total, more than 80 Latin Kings members and associates have faced state or federal charges since 2006 and, of those, approximately 65 have been convicted federally, with only a few fugitives still facing federal charges.

Zambrano is the highest-ranking leader of the Latin Kings to be convicted since Gustavo “Gino” Colon, who also holds the title of “Corona” and is serving a life sentence that was imposed in 2000 for running a continuing criminal enterprise

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

For further information about the Zambrano trial, see the government’s previous press release at: [http://www.justice.gov/usao/iln/pr/chicago/2011/pr0407\\_01.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/usao/iln/pr/chicago/2011/pr0407_01.pdf) .

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