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TWO NEWBURGH LATIN KINGS GANG MEMBERS CONVICTED
IN WHITE PLAINS FEDERAL COURT OF DRUG CONSPIRACY
AND GUN POSSESSION CHARGES

18 Members and Associates of Newburgh Latin Kings Gang Now Convicted

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that brothers FELIX LAGARES and KELVIN LAGARES, members of the Latin Kings gang in Newburgh, New York (the "Newburgh Latin Kings"), were each found guilty yesterday of conspiring to distribute crack cocaine, heroin, cocaine, and marijuana, and using, carrying, and possessing firearms during, and in relation to, their drug conspiracy. FELIX and KELVIN LAGARES were convicted after a two-week jury trial before U.S. District Judge Cathy Seibel. The LAGARES brothers are two of 33 members and associates of the Newburgh Latin Kings charged in connection with the case, 18 of whom have now been convicted.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara stated: "The Latin Kings have wrought havoc in Newburgh for years, terrorizing its residents and leaving a trail of destruction. Yesterday's guilty verdicts should make clear that any member or associate of this dangerous and deadly criminal organization will be held accountable. As shown by the successful prosecution of the Lagares brothers, this Office is committed to returning Newburgh's streets to its rightful owners – the law-abiding residents who call the city home."

According to the Indictment and the evidence at trial:

FELIX LAGARES and KELVIN LAGARES conspired to sell crack cocaine, heroin, cocaine, and marijuana with other members and associates of the Newburgh Latin Kings in drug markets in the East End neighborhood of Newburgh that were operated by the gang. Members of the gang sold drugs from corners where only members and trusted associates of the Newburgh Latin Kings were permitted to sell.

To protect their turf and their drugs, members and associates of the gang used and carried guns, which they kept in close proximity to the corners where they sold drugs. Some of the guns, known among the co-conspirators as "Nation guns," were bought on the street with money collected from gang members in the form of dues. Others were bought by various members and associates of the gang. Several guns were shared among the co-conspirators to protect the

Newburgh Latin Kings' drug spots and to arm co-conspirators for violent "missions" undertaken to shoot suspected members of rival gangs, and others.

For example, Newburgh police officers recovered a loaded .44 Magnum revolver that belonged to FELIX LAGARES from a baby stroller in the gang's drug stash house. Newburgh police officers also recovered a loaded .22 caliber pistol from him at the drug spot at Benkard Avenue and William Street. In addition, Newburgh police officers recovered more than 50 rounds of hollow point ammunition for FELIX LAGARES' .22 caliber pistol from the home of KELVIN LAGARES, which the brothers also used as a stash house for their crack cocaine, cocaine, and heroin. KELVIN LAGARES also possessed an assault rifle during the conspiracy.

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FELIX and KELVIN LAGARES each face a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison for the drug conspiracy count and five years in prison for the firearms possession count. The sentence for the firearms possession count must run consecutively with any other sentence imposed. They are scheduled to be sentenced on May 17, 2012.

The trial of the LAGARES brothers was the first of three trials scheduled in the case. Seven defendants charged with racketeering, among other crimes, are scheduled for trial before Judge Seibel on June 4, 2010. Eight other defendants, who are charged with murder in aid of racketeering, among other crimes, are scheduled for trial before Judge Seibel on January 23, 2013. Sixteen other defendants have pled guilty to narcotics conspiracy and gun possession charges.

The investigation resulting in the prosecution of members and associates of the Newburgh Latin Kings, including FELIX and KELVIN LAGARES, was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's ("FBI") Hudson Valley Safe Streets Task Force, which combined the efforts of dozens of law enforcement officers from federal, state, and local agencies and departments, including agents and officers with the FBI, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the City of Newburgh Police Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, the Middletown Police Department, the Orange County Sheriff's Office, and the New York State Police. Mr. Bharara thanked the member agencies of the Task Force for their work in the investigation.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's White Plains Division. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nicholas McQuaid, Benjamin Allee, and Abigail Kurland are in charge of the prosecution.

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