



Department of Justice

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FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS FLORIDA MAN ON DRUG AND FIREARMS CHARGES

WASHINGTON – Michael A. Garcia, 38, a former leader of the Latin Kings gang in Florida, was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of drug trafficking and illegal possession of firearms, Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division announced today.

The thirteen-count indictment against Garcia, of Tampa, Fla., was returned by a federal grand jury in Tampa on June 12, 2008. Garcia is charged with conspiracy to distribute Ecstasy and more than five kilograms of cocaine between December 2005 and June 2008, and the distribution of, and possession with intent to distribute, cocaine and Ecstasy on six different occasions during the same time period. In addition, the defendant is charged with being a convicted felon in possession of firearms and ammunition.

If convicted, Garcia faces a maximum of life in prison and a fine of up to \$4 million on the conspiracy charge. He faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and up to \$1 million in fines for each of the possession counts. Garcia also faces a maximum of ten years in prison a \$250,000 fine on the firearms count. In addition, the government is seeking forfeiture in this case.

The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Vincent Tortorella of the Criminal Division's Gang Squad. The investigation is being handled by a joint task force of local and federal agencies led by the FBI, and including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and the Tampa Police Department.

An indictment is merely a charge and defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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