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## **17 MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES OF VIOLENT GANG INDICTED**

### ***Five Members Alleged to Have Committed Gang-Related Murders in Big Spring, Texas***

WASHINGTON – A federal grand jury in Lubbock, Texas has charged 17 members and associates of the violent gang known as the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (ALKQN) with various charges related to their alleged narcotics and weapons trafficking violations, a well as a variety of alleged violent crimes throughout Texas, Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Rita M. Glavin and Acting U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas James T. Jacks announced today.

Four of the 17 defendants were arrested last night and today in Lubbock, Midland, Big Spring, and Mission, Texas, as well as in Chicago. Eleven defendants are already in federal or state custody on related and unrelated charges. Two are considered fugitives. The defendants arrested today will make their initial appearance in Abilene, Texas, before U.S. Magistrate Philip R. Lane, on Friday, Feb. 27, 2009.

The 11-count indictment, returned earlier this month and unsealed today, charges each of the defendants with conspiracy to distribute and possession with intent to distribute cocaine and marijuana. Three defendants are also charged with conspiring to deal in firearms. The indictment also includes drug distribution charges and various firearms charges, including using and carrying a firearm to commit murder during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

“The message this indictment sends not just to these defendants but to those who support and participate in gangs is that with the cooperation of our law enforcement partners at the federal, state and local level, we will work tirelessly to protect our communities and punish those who seek to corrupt them through violence and gun and drug trafficking,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Rita M. Glavin.

Acting U.S. Attorney Jacks said, “Regardless of what dramatic name they attached to their group, criminal gangs are just that – criminals. Like most criminals, their illegal activities of drug dealing and engaging in violent crime are a cancer on our communities; communities comprised of honest, hard working people who are simply trying to earn a living, raise their families and live in peace. As evidenced by this action, law enforcement is committed to removing that cancer through determined investigative effort and the cooperation of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies as was done in this case. All of these agencies, with the help and support of the community, will continue to pursue these groups until they are no longer a part of our environment.”

The defendants arrested today are:

Jesus Martinez, a/k/a Solid, 28, of Midland  
John Guzman, 30, of Big Spring  
Hiluterio Chavez, a/k/a Zeus, 33, of Chicago.

Eliseo Perez, a/k/a Wicked, 28, of Mission, Texas was arrested Wednesday night.

Defendants indicted but not yet arrested are:

Guerrero Olivas, a/k/a Screech, 26, of Big Spring  
Michael Conde, a/k/a Psycho, 21, of Lubbock

Defendants previously arrested include:

Jose Robledo Nava, a/k/a Chino, 30, of Lubbock  
Luis Nava, a/k/a Flaco, 25, of Midland  
Reynaldo Nava, a/k/a Rat, 27, of Big Spring  
Robert Allen Ramirez, a/k/a Nesyo, 27, of Big Spring  
Marie Chavez, a/k/a Shorty, 28, of Lubbock  
Carol Ann Rivas Nava, 20, of Big Spring  
Cecily Dominique Juarez, 20, of Midland  
James Jonathan Cole, a/k/a Blitz, 19, of Lamesa, Texas  
Eduardo Daniel Mares, a/k/a Pitt, 21, of Seminole, Texas  
Gabriel Lee Gonzales, 21, of Fort Stockton, Texas  
David Hellums, a/k/a CutThroat, 35, of Big Spring

The indictment alleges that from 2001 until Dec. 13, 2008, when six of the defendants were arrested, the defendants, as members of the ALKQN, conspired to distribute multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine and marijuana throughout Texas and elsewhere. They acquired, packaged, stored, and transported the cocaine and marijuana, and according to court documents filed in the case, imported the narcotics from Mexico into the South Texas region, and then on to Big Spring, Lubbock, and Midland for further distribution. In furtherance of their conspiracy, one or more of the defendants is alleged to have committed numerous acts of violence, including murder, aggravated assault and arson.

During part of the time of the conspiracy, from 2004 through mid-July 2005, defendants Jose Robledo Nava, Jesus Martinez, and Hiluterio Chavez are alleged to have conspired to deal in firearms. They allegedly acquired the firearms, stored and transported them, and traded them for cocaine. Court documents filed in the case allege that the defendants illegally transported and trafficked the firearms throughout Texas and Chicago.

Jose Robledo Nava is allegedly the ALKQN leader in Texas. He, along with James Johnathan Cole, Robert Allen Ramirez, Gabriel Lee Gonzales and Eduardo Daniel Mares are charged in the indictment with the May 4, 2008, murders of Valerie Garcia and Michael Cardona, in Big Spring.

According to an affidavit supporting a criminal complaint filed in the case, on May 4, 2008, Jose Nava allegedly directed James Cole and Robert Ramirez to go in two vehicles to conduct a drive-by shooting on their rivals. Robert Ramirez was to be the passenger in the lead vehicle to confirm the targets, and James Johnathan Cole, armed with an AK-47, was to be the shooter in the following vehicle, which was to be driven by Gabriel Lee Gonzales.

With Ramirez and Eduardo Daniel Mares in the lead vehicle and Cole and Gonzales following in the second vehicle, after Ramirez and Mares passed the house of the rival gang members, Ramirez allegedly called Gonzales' cell phone and conveyed Jose Nava's previous order to him. The shooter fired into a crowd of people, striking six persons, including a pregnant woman and a three-year-old girl. Two of those victims, the pregnant woman and one of three men shot, died of their wounds.

The affidavit states that Ramirez, Mares, Cole and Gonzales then allegedly drove the two vehicles to a body shop where Cole retrieved the spent AK-47 shell casings and discarded them. Cole, Ramirez and Mares then drove to a fellow ALKQN residence where Cole admitted shooting the AK-47 and killing at least one person at the residence where the narcotics trafficking rivals were located.

An indictment is merely an accusation by a federal grand jury and a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty. However, if convicted, defendants Nava, Cole, Ramirez, Gonzales and Mares each face a maximum statutory sentence of death or life in prison. The remaining defendants face a maximum statutory sentence of life in prison and a fine of up to \$4 million.

While stating the investigation is ongoing, acting U.S. Attorney Jacks praised the excellent investigative efforts of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, the Midland and El Paso U.S. Attorney's Offices, DEA, FBI, ICE, ATF, U.S. Marshals Service, Texas Department of Public Safety, Lubbock Police Department, Lubbock County Sheriff's Office, Midland Police Department, Houston Police Department, Big Spring Police Department, and the Howard County District Attorney's Office.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Cody L. Skipper of the Lubbock U.S. Attorney's Office and Trial Attorney Joseph A. Cooley of the Department of Justice's Criminal Division's Gang Unit are prosecuting the case.

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