



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Southern District of New York

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES 50 MEMBERS
AND ASSOCIATES OF TRINITARIOS STREET GANG WITH
RACKETEERING, NARCOTICS, AND FIREARMS OFFENSES**

Defendants Include Seven Leaders of Bronx-Based Gang

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Wilbert Plummer, the Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), Raymond W. Kelly, the Commissioner of the Police Department for the City of New York ("NYPD"), Joseph Anarumo Jr., the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Division of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"), James T. Hayes, Jr., the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's ("ICE") Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), and Brian Fischer, the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision ("DOCCS"), announced charges today against 50 members and associates of the Bronx Trinitarios Gang ("BTG") for racketeering, narcotics, and firearms offenses. The Indictment alleges that BTG operated as a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO), and charges 41 defendants with racketeering conspiracy, related to their participation in this criminal organization, which engaged in narcotics trafficking, murder and attempted murder.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "As alleged, for nearly eight years, the Trinitarios street gang terrorized a wide swath of the Bronx with their drug dealing and violence. Gangs like the Trinitarios are a cancer on New York's neighborhoods – both in the physical

harm they inflict and the atmosphere of despair they create. Today's arrests again demonstrate this Office's commitment to eradicating the scourge of gangs throughout the Southern District of New York and to giving back to residents the peaceful enjoyment of their communities. In the past two years, we have prosecuted over 400 alleged gang members and our efforts remain very much ongoing."

DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge Wilbert Plummer stated, "Today, law enforcement has caught up with the drug trafficking organization, known as the Trinitarios again. Over 30 arrests were made for distributing multitudes of illicit narcotics throughout the streets of New York City. Our residents deserve to live in a neighborhood free from drug trafficking and the associated violence."

NYPD Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said: "The 'Bad Boys' are out of their narcotics-related business of shootings, stabbings and gun trafficking because of outstanding work by the NYPD Gang Division, federal agents and prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's Office."

ATF Special Agent-in-Charge Joseph Anarumo Jr. said: "Today's arrest of members of the violent 'Bronx Trinitarios Gang' gang is yet another indication of law enforcement's pledge to making our communities safer. This is the second, in-depth strike against this violent gang which terrorized upper Manhattan and the Bronx. Today's arrests only reinforce ATF's commitment to working together with our partners targeting armed, violent gang members and narcotics traffickers preying on our neighborhoods."

ICE HSI Special Agent-in-Charge James T. Hayes said: "The enforcement action today is part of our continuing attack on violent gang members who have little regard for the law and degrade the quality of life in our communities. Our ultimate goal is to get these gang members off New York City streets, prosecute them for their crimes, and when possible remove them from the United States."

NYS DOCCS Commissioner Brian Fischer said: "The cooperation and collaboration between the various law enforcement agencies that led to the successful outcome of Operation Patria highlights the effectiveness of this joint effort. Members of the DOCCS Inspector General's office, as well as other key Department staff, provided critically important support to this investigation and we will continue to cooperate with our law enforcement partners whenever the need arises."

According to the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

The BTG is a criminal organization that operates primarily in Bronx, New York. BTG members and associates engage in acts of violence, including murder and attempted murder, and threats of violence, in order to protect and expand their criminal operations and to defend their territory against rival street gangs. BTG members and associates also sell numerous types of narcotics, including marijuana, crack cocaine, powder cocaine, oxycodone and suboxone.

According to the Indictment, LEONIDES SIERRA, RICHARD GONZALEZ, JOSE CRUZ, CARLOS URENA, EDWIN CIRIACO, ANIBAL RAMOS, and ANTONIO PENA are leaders and members of the BTG who directed other members to carry out illegal and other activities as part of the racketeering conspiracy including murder, attempted murder, kidnapping,

and narcotics trafficking. The Indictment also charges that many members were part of a gang within the BTG that was headed by CRUZ and was known as the “Bad Boys.”

Forty-nine BTG members and associates are charged today with conspiring to sell more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, more than 28 grams of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, oxycodone, and suboxone. Forty-three individuals are charged with using and carrying firearms during and in relation to the racketeering conspiracy, and with possessing firearms in furtherance of that conspiracy. Thirteen individuals are also charged with trafficking firearms without being licensed importers, manufacturers, or dealers of firearms.

In connection with these arrests, federal and local law enforcement officers also executed court-authorized search warrants at 22 locations tied to the investigation. During the arrests and searches, agents and officers seized, among other evidence, quantities of marijuana, cocaine, heroin and ecstasy, at least two firearms with ammunition, two machetes, and multiple knives.

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In a coordinated strike, 33 defendants were arrested in New York late last night and early this morning. They will be presented later this afternoon in Manhattan federal court. Three defendants, SIERRA, JUAN NUNEZ and JONATHAN MAJDANSKI, are already in custody on state charges. JONATHAN EVANGELISTA was arrested in Georgia. As of the time of this press release, the following defendants are still being sought: ALFRED LAFORD, CESAR ALMONTE, CARLONELL PAULINO, RONALD PERALTA, JOSE BALLEENILLA, JOSE GERONIMO-FIGUEROA, HENRY O. PENA, DAVE MCPHERSON, VANCE HILL, NELSON JORGE-MARTINEZ and HENRY PAULINO. ANTONIO PENA and JULIO BRITO are believed to be in the Dominican Republic, and the Office will seek their extradition to the United States. A chart identifying each defendant, the charges and the maximum penalties is attached to this release.

The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge Paul A. Engelmayer.

Today’s charges are the result of a long-term investigation, “Operation Patria,” conducted by federal and local law enforcement officers working with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York. Operation Patria is the second coordinated law enforcement strike against the Trinitarios gang. In March 2009, 41 members and associates of the gang’s Manhattan faction were arrested and charged with narcotics and firearms offenses. The original indictment was superseded to add racketeering charges, including murder, conspiracy to murder, and multiple attempted murders in aid of racketeering.

Mr. Bharara praised the outstanding investigative work of the DEA, the NYPD, the ATF, ICE, and DOCCS. He added that the investigation is continuing.

The Office's Violent Crimes Unit is overseeing the case. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nola B. Heller, Jessica Ortiz and Sarah Krissoff are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

United States v. Leonides Sierra, et al.

Count	Charge	Defendants	Maximum Penalties
1	Racketeering Conspiracy	Leonides Sierra Richard Gonzalez Jose Cruz Carlos Urena Edwin Ciriaco Anibal Ramos Alfred Laford Antonio Pena Julio Brito Juan Nunez Christopher Johnson Donald Novas Jose Feliciano Felix Lopez-Cabrera Carlos Lopez Jose Marmelejos Noel Acosta-Disla Tomas Castillo Hugo Almonte Cesar Almonte Carloneil Paulino Ronald Peralta Jose Castillo Mark Martinez Jose Ballenilla Luis Beltran Luis Cabrera-Recio Loren Guzman Melvin Amparo Jonathan Majdanski Miguel Strong Jose Barcarer Jose Geronimo-Figueroa Edgardo Ponce Michael Delacruz David Patino Eduardo Holguin Ronny Evangelista Luis Cabrera Carlos Rodriguez Henry O. Pena	20 years in prison

2	Conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana; 28 grams and more of crack cocaine; powder cocaine; oxycodone; suboxone	Leonides Sierra Richard Gonzalez Jose Cruz Carlos Urena Edwin Ciriaco Anibal Ramos Alfred Laford Antonio Pena Julio Brito Juan Nunez Christopher Johnson Donald Novas Jose Feliciano Felix Lopez-Cabrera Carlos Lopez Jose Marmelejos Tomas Castillo Hugo Almonte Cesar Almonte Carloneil Paulino Ronald Peralta Jose Castillo Mark Martinez Jose Ballenilla Luis Beltran Luis Cabrera-Recio Loren Guzman Melvin Amparo Jonathan Majdanski Miguel Strong Jose Barcarer Jose Geronimo-Figueroa Edgardo Ponce Michael Delacruz David Patino Eduardo Holguin Ronny Evangelista Luis Cabrera Carlos Rodriguez Henry O. Pena Dave McPherson Vance Hill Greydin Liz-Castillo Nelson Jorge-Martinez Luis Saladin Christopher Robles Joseph Hernandez Jonathan Evangelista Henry Paulino	Maximum: 40 years in prison Mandatory minimum: 5 years in prison
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3	Using and carrying firearms during and in relation to the racketeering conspiracy, and with possessing firearms in furtherance of that conspiracy	Leonides Sierra Richard Gonzalez Jose Cruz Carlos Urena Edwin Ciriaco Alfred Laford Antonio Pena Julio Brito Juan Nunez Christopher Johnson Donald Novas Jose Feliciano Felix Lopez-Cabrera Carlos Lopez Jose Marmelejos Noel Acosta-Disla Tomas Castillo Hugo Almonte Cesar Almonte Carloneil Paulino Ronald Peralta Jose Castillo Mark Martinez Jose Ballenilla Luis Beltran Luis Cabrera-Recio Loren Guzman Melvin Amparo Jonathan Majdanski Miguel Strong Jose Barcarer Jose Geronimo-Figueroa Edgardo Ponce Michael Delacruz David Patino Eduardo Holguin Ronny Evangelista Luis Cabrera Carlos Rodriguez Henry O. Pena Luis Saladin Christopher Robles Joseph Hernandez	Maximum: Life in prison Mandatory minimum: 10 years in prison, to run consecutive to every other sentence imposed
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4	Firearms Trafficking	Jose Cruz Carlos Urena Christopher Johnson Donald Novas Jose Marmelejos Hugo Almonte Mark Martinez Jose Ballenilla Luis Cabrera-Recio Eduardo Holguin Dave McPherson Luis Saladin Henry Paulino	5 years in prison
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Defendant	Residence	Age
Alfred Laford	Bronx, NY	21
Anibal Ramos	Bronx, NY	33
Antonio Pena	Dominican Republic	34
Carloneil Paulino	Bronx, NY	20
Carlos Lopez	Bronx, NY	23
Carlos Rodriguez	Bronx, NY	20
Carlos Urena	New York, NY	25
Cesar Almonte	Bronx, NY	20
Christopher Johnson	Bronx, NY	27
Christopher Robles	Bronx, NY	22
Dave McPherson	Bronx, NY	31
David Patino	Bronx, NY	19
Donald Novas	Bronx, NY	32
Edgardo Ponce	Bronx, NY	22
Eduardo Holguin	Bronx, NY	19
Edwin Ciriaco	New York, NY	24
Felix Lopez-Cabrera	Bronx, NY	21
Greydin Liz-Castillo	Bronx, NY	25
Henry O. Pena	Bronx, NY	29
Henry Paulino	Bronx, NY	25
Hugo Almonte	Bronx, NY	26
Jonathan Evangelista	Bronx, NY	23
Jonathan Majdanski	Incarcerated	28
Jose Ballenilla	Bronx, NY	19
Jose Barcarer	Bronx, NY	27
Jose Castillo	Bronx, NY	25
Jose Cruz	Bronx, NY	25
Jose Feliciano	Bronx, NY	30
Jose Geronimo-Figueroa	Bronx, NY	22
Jose Marmelejos	Bronx, NY	23
Joseph Hernandez	Bronx, NY	21

Juan Nunez	Incarcerated	25
Julio Brito	Dominican Republic	23
Leonides Sierra	Incarcerated	44
Loren Guzman	New York, NY	24
Luis Beltran	Bronx, NY	23
Luis Cabrera	Bronx, NY	19
Luis Cabrera-Recio	Bronx, NY	19
Luis Saladin	Bronx, NY	22
Mark Martinez	Bronx, NY	20
Melvin Amparo	Bronx, NY	25
Michael Delacruz	Bronx, NY	27
Miguel Strong	Bronx, NY	22
Nelson Jorge-Martinez	Bronx, NY	23
Noel Acosta-Disla	Bronx, NY	22
Richard Gonzalez	Bronx, NY	29
Ronald Peralta	Bronx, NY	22
Ronny Evangelista	Bronx, NY	26
Tomas Castillo	Bronx, NY	24
Vance Hill	Bronx, NY	31