Mara Salvatrucha Street Gang

An International Criminal Enterprise with Roots in El Salvador's Civil War

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Introduction

Like 19th Century Irish-American gangs, which arose from an immigrant community that fled famine, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) has its origins in turmoil abroad. As the brutal civil war in El Salvador was waged in the 1980's pitting leftist guerillas against the American backed government, more than a million Salvadorians sought refuge in the United States. Thousands literally walked much of the way to America, initially settling in the Rampart neighborhoods of Los Angeles, where they were not warmly welcomed by established Hispanic communities. "Mexican gangs picked on them mercilessly." (Valdez, 2000)

Like the Irish before them, the Salvadorians banded together to protect themselves. Salvadorians teenagers were particularly susceptible to the lure of gang's life.

Following the end of civil war, in 1992, a second wave of immigrants from El Salvador transformed MS-13. The new arrivals included veterans from both sides of the conflict. These people had weapons training and had seen and done terrible things, according to Al Valdez a gang investigator in Orange County California, almost immediately the level of violence escalated. While gangs typically confine themselves to fighting one another and knocking off rivals, MS-13 killed wantonly, shooting police officers and even civilians, simply to gain street credentials.

It was no longer about self-protection, but about the bragging rights of who was the biggest and baddest in town.

According to the National Drug Intelligence Center Mara Salvatrucha poses a serious threat in Central America, Mexico, and Canada. Gang members deported to El Salvador from the United States in the early 1990s who had no previous criminal record in El Salvador were released to an unsuspecting population. Once in El Salvador, Mara Salvatrucha members quickly migrated to Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. With 20,000 to 40,000 members in the region, the gang poses a significant threat. In the late 1990s Mara Salvatrucha members also established a clique in Vancouver, Canada, consisting of U.S. base members and members from Central America. (NDIC 2004)
History

In the early 1980s a violent civil war began in El Salvador, which would last more than 12 years. Approximately 100,000 people were killed in the war, more than one million people fled from El Salvador to the United States. The Salvadorian refugees and immigrants initially settled primarily in Southern California and Washington, D.C.. Some of the refugees and immigrants had ties with La Mara, a violent street gang from El Salvador. Others had been members of Paramilitary groups like the Farabundo Marti National Liberation front (FMNL) during the civil war. FMNL was made up of Salvadorian peasants who were trained as guerilla fighters. Many were adept at using explosives, firearms and booby traps. Most of the Salvadorian refugees settled in the established Hispanic neighborhoods of the "Rampart" area of Los Angeles. In the late 1980s, some refugees and refugee members of La Mara and FMNL formed what is know today as the Mara Salvatrucha (MS) street gang in Los Angeles. Like many street gangs, MS initially formed for protection, but quickly developed a reputation for being organized and extremely violent. MS membership continues to be fed by refugee from groups like FMNL. (Valdez, 2000)

Originally, only Salvadorians could become members of Mara Salvatrucha. However, MS. now includes members from Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. Mara Salvatrucha also has a few African-American members. MS has broken the race barrier for membership, but most new members are still selected because of their ethnic (Central American) background. The Majority of MS gang members are between the ages of 11 and 40 years. (Valdez, 2000)

During the 1990s under increased law enforcement pressure in Los Angeles, Mara Salvatrucha members expanded their presence throughout the United States and into Central America, challenging established gangs such as 18th Street and Mexican Mafia (La Eme). By 1992 Mara Salvatrucha had established cliques in Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia. Mara Salvatrucha members deported from the United States established cliques in El Salvador. (NDIC 2004)

Mara Salvatrucha cliques also gained valuable turf as a result of the gang's rivalry with the 18th Street gang during the early 1990s. The two gangs engaged in a series of violent confrontations that eventually involved other Hispanic street gangs in the Los Angeles area. Although there was no clear winner, Mara Salvatrucha succeeded in gaining control of some drug distribution locations in the Rampart section of Los Angeles. Mara Salvatrucha members and 18th Street members continue their rivalry in cities throughout the United States and in El Salvador. (NDIC 2004)

In 1993 a dispute arose between Mara Salvatrucha members and affiliates of the Mexican Mafia prison gang. The conflict was in response to Mexican Mafia's demand that all Hispanic gangs in Los Angeles pay them a "tax" on drug sales. In 1994 the two gangs reached a settlement in which Mara Salvatrucha cliques in Los Angeles agreed to become a source of supply for cocaine and marijuana to the Mexican Mafia and serve as enforces and extortionists in exchange for exemption from the drug tax. This settlement forged a close relationship between the former rivals, and Mara Salvatrucha was designated a Sureño 13 gang a Southern California Hispanic street gang affiliated with the Mexican Mafia prison gang. (NDIC 2004)
Criminal Activity

Mara Salvatrucha or MS is involved in exporting stolen cars from the U.S. to South America. The cars are often traded for drugs when dealing with cartels. It is estimated that 80% of the cars driven in El Salvador were stolen from the United States. Car theft is lucrative business for MS. The Mara Salvatrucha gang is also involved in a variety of Criminal enterprises. As with members of other gangs, MS members seem willing to commit almost any crime, but MS gang members tend to have a higher level of criminal involvement than other gang members. MS members have been involved in burglaries, auto theft, narcotics, extortion, murder, rape, witness intimidation, illegal firearms sales, car theft and aggravated assaults. In terms of drug trafficking activities, common drugs sold by MS members include cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and methamphetamine. Mara Salvatrucha gang members have even placed a 'tax' on prostitute and non-gang member drug dealers who are working in MS "turf." Failure to pay up will most likely result in violence.

Typical Identifiers

Mara Salvatrucha members identify themselves with tattoos such as the number "13," or the Spanish word "trece". MS gang members will also use the Spanish word sureño, meaning "southerner" to identify themselves. Sometimes sureño is abbreviated to SUR. These terms make reference to the fact that MS gang members like to claim they are from southern California as opposed to northern California, and are rivals with northern California gangs. Often, this rivalry is taken outside the state of California.

Mara Salvatrucha gang members have several ongoing rivalries with large southern California gangs, including the 18th Street gang. In California, MS-13 members commonly attack 18th Street gang members on sight. There are many Hispanic gangs, including MS, which use the number "13," the number 13 represents the thirteenth letter in the alphabet, which is M for Mexican Mafia and the terms sureño and SUR as identifiers, including street/prison gangs outside of California. It is important to identify specific tattoos used by the Mara Salvatrucha gang, which include "M" or "MS," in addition to the 13 or SUR identification. Another common tattoo seen is "Salvadorian Pride."

The most hand sign used by MS members is the letter M formed by using three fingers and pointing the hand downward. This hand sign can resemble the pitchfork sign used by Folk/People Nation gangs from the Midwest, and can be made with the fingers pointing up or down. The symbols used as tattoos are also used in graffiti and personal writings.
Organizational Structure

Mara Salvatrucha is a loosely structured street gang. There are no known international or national leaders or single governing authority; however, law enforcement reporting indicates that a consolidation of authority under several power Mara Salvatrucha members in California and Virginia may be occurring.

The organizational cliques structure of individual Mara Salvatrucha cliques varies. Cliques in locations such as Los Angeles and now Charlotte and Atlanta have defined structures with designated leaders, or "Shot Callers". Shot Callers have specific duties such as controlling drug trafficking, weapons trafficking, and financial activities. Several cliques have adopted a military-style structure, appointing captains, lieutenants, and soldiers. Cliques with fewer members are less likely to appoint leaders to specific roles, although the senior members in most cliques lead meetings, plan the clique's criminal activities, and oversee its treasury.

MS-13 Membership

Mara Salvatrucha is one of the largest street gangs in the United States. The gang is estimated to have 30,000 to 50,000 members and associate members worldwide 8,000 to 10,000 of who reside in the United States. According to law enforcement officials, there are an estimated 125 cliques in 31 states and the District of Columbia as of 2003. Recent reporting indicates that Mara Salvatrucha membership is increasing in the United States, Canada, and Mexico as the gang established new cliques and recruits new members. Mara Salvatrucha members typically are Salvadorians Nationals or fist-generation Salvadorians Americans; however, many cliques in the United States now accept members from Belize, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico.

Mara Salvatrucha cliques conducts annual meetings that vary from clique to clique. Some cliques also have weekly or monthly meetings. The cliques use the meetings to plan criminal activity, discipline members, resolve disputes, and initiate new members. Most meetings are held at local restaurants outdoor recreating facilities, parks, pool halls, private homes, and rented hotel rooms. Occasionally, the gang holds a national or regional level meeting, referred to as a Universal, with representatives of cliques from multiple states attending. A recent universal meeting occurred in June 2003 in Ocean City, Maryland. Representatives from Mara Salvatrucha cliques in California, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., attended.

All Mara Salvatrucha members are required to complete an initiation process to test the prospective member's courage and loyalty. Males are initiated in one of two ways by committing a violent crime or by being "beat-in." In January 2003 three Mara Salvatrucha members in Durham, North Carolina, robbed a supermarket as part of their gang initiation. A prospective male member who selects being beaten into a Mara Salvatrucha clique is placed within a circle of gang members chosen by the clique leader. Clique members then beat the prospective member for 13 seconds. Prospective female members may be initiated the same way as males but have a third initiation option, which is to have sex with 13 clique members. (There are reports that this is not an option with some cliques.) In several cliques in the Mid-Atlantic region it has been reported that the location in which a member was initiated determines the member's status. In these cliques, members initiated in El Salvador sometimes hold a higher status than members initiated in California or Virginia. (Source: National Drug Intelligence Center.)
The Violence

MS-13 is one of the most violent gangs active in the United States. One can surmise that due to many of these gang members being exposed to military training at such an early age, this is probably the largest contribution factor. Another factor that must be noted, is MS-13 is still in contact with other members of MS-13 and members of the different paramilitary groups still in El Salvador, again giving members access to military type weapons. Gangs and violence are not new to the U.S., but the wave of violence that MS-13 has shown has taken "gangbanging" to a new level. Members of MS-13 have been known to booby trap their "stash house" and to attack their rivals with extreme violence. Another factor that law enforcement has had to contend with is that MS-13 does not fear law enforcement. The Washington Post reported MS-13 as being rated as one of the most violent gangs in America. Also cited in this report were that three federal agents were killed by members of the gang, and that there have been numerous shootings involving members of the MS-13 and law enforcement officers around the United States. MS-13 members have been involved in burglaries, auto theft, narcotics, extortion, murder, rape, illegal firearms sales, car theft, aggravated assaults and witness intimidation. Brenda Paz a pregnant 18-year-old woman and key witness against members of the Mara Salvatrucha was murdered after providing investigators with key evidence against a notorious MS-13 gang member. Brenda Paz told Federal investigators that two MS-13 members had told her of their involvement in the slaying of a rival gang member in 2001. One of the members was Denis Rivera, Paz's boyfriend and a reputed MS-13 leader who told Paz that cutting the victim's throat "was just like cutting chicken." Paz, who was born in Honduras and raised on the street of Los Angeles and the daughter of an MS-13 member had, become a key witness not only in the federal probe but also in more than a half-dozen other investigations of the gang. "Smiley," as she was known in MS-13 for her charm and cheerfulness, told detectives from Arlington, Fairfax and Alexandria and five other states, about stabbings, shootings and armed robberies. Looking for a way out from the gang Paz, entered witness protection in March but left in June because she was bored and unhappy and could not resist the lure of gang life.
Alliances and Rivalries to MS-13

Mara Salvatrucha is closely associated with gangs belonging to the Sureño alliance. This is the result of a 1994 agreement in which Mara Salvatrucha cliques in Los Angeles agreed to supply Mexican Mafia (La Eme) with cocaine and marijuana and serves as enforcers and extortionists for Mexican Mafia in exchange of exemption from a drug "tax." The agreement also provided Mara Salvatrucha members incarcerated in the California Department of Corrections (CDC) with protection from other street and prison gangs. This affiliation is strong within the CDC system and on the streets of Southern California but is less significant outside of the Southwest and Pacific regions.

Mara Salvatrucha cliques associate with other gangs for financial benefit or protection. In New Jersey, Mara Salvatrucha cliques are aligned with La Gran Familia, an alliance of 12 Hispanic gangs including 13 Cholos, Diosas, Azteca, La Sangre, Los Palomos, Los Pituetos, Los Primos, Mexican Boy, Niños Malos, Norteños, and Salvadoreños With Pride. However, some of the gangs belonging to La Gran Familia, such as Salvadoreños With Pride, are rivals of Mara Salvatrucha. Several Mara Salvatrucha cliques in Houston, Texas, associate with Southwest Cholos, and Mara Salvatrucha cliques in Virginia reportedly have an alliance with Rolling 60s Crips.

Mara Salvatrucha Primary adversary is the Hispanic gang 18th Street, which is based in Los Angeles. The conflict between Mara Salvatrucha and 18th Street arose over the control of criminal activity in several locations in Los Angeles, and the rivalry has since expanded to other locations throughout the United States, Central America, and Mexico. Other Mara Salvatrucha adversaries include 52 Hoover Street Crips, Brown Pride, Gangster Disciples, Harpy's, La Primera, La Raza, Latin Kings, Norteños, Salvadoreños With Pride, and United Blood Nation.

Today's Mara Salvatrucha

Today's, Mara Salvatrucha, also known as MS-13, is one of the largest Hispanic Street gangs in the United States. Traditionally, the gang consisted of loosely affiliated groups known as cliques; however, law enforcement officials have reported increased coordination of criminal activity among Mara Salvatrucha cliques in the Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and New York metropolitan areas.

MS-13 is attempting to become a unified criminal enterprise operating under one leadership. Seemingly, members of large MS-13 populated area travel the country and abroad to provide leadership or facilitate organization. Source: FBI (2004 November 3) Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) Attempts to Unite.

- According to reporting from the Prince George's County Police Department, MS-13 members from Los Angeles, New York, and Northern Virginia were observed together in Prince George's County, Maryland, in August 2004.

- In July 2004, Central American-based MS-13 cliques leaders held a gang summit in Honduras to discuss leadership issues.

- Los Angeles law enforcement gang officers were quoted in the media saying, "MS has a worldwide leader, Nelson Camandarie, who moves between Los Angeles and El Salvador and deploys MS-13 members on various missions." This information has not been corroborated; however, Comandarie has traveled within the United States and possibly internationally to facilitate gang activity.

The Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang is estimated to have between 30,000 and 50,000 members and associate members worldwide - 8,000 to 10,000 of whom reside in the United States. Members smuggle illicit drugs, primarily powdered cocaine and marijuana, into the United States and transport and distribute the drugs throughout the country. Some members also are involved in alien smuggling, assault, drive-by shooting, homicide, identification theft, prostitution operations, robbery, and weapons trafficking. (Source: National Drug Intelligence Center)
Mara Salvatrucha in the United States

According to the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), Mara Salvatrucha membership and cliques continue to expand in the United States. In 2003 law enforcement officials reported confirmed or suspected Mara Salvatrucha activity in 31 States and the District of Columbia, an increase of 17 states since 1996. The expanded geographic presence of Mara Salvatrucha has been attributed to members who left cliques in Los Angeles and, to a lesser extent, the Washington, D.C., and New York metropolitan areas to establish new cliques in other areas throughout the United States. This expansion of Mara Salvatrucha outside its traditional geographic areas of concentration may also be a reflection of increased law enforcement pressures in those areas. Mara Salvatrucha members from Central America, primarily El Salvador, who entered the country illegally, established some cliques in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions of the country. Most recently gang members have been identified in Rhode Island, South Carolina, in areas along the Southwest Border and, increasingly, in North Carolina.
Number of Mara Salvatrucha cliques in the United States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>number of cliques</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Georgia</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
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<td>Kentucky</td>
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<td>Nevada</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Drug Intelligence Center

MS 13 has been designated as an FBI, National Gang Strategy priority target group due to its propensity for violence, rapid growth, and expansion. Overall, MS 13's rapid growth, movement towards banding together, and gang's reputation for violence has facilitated its migration into new areas.

**MS 13's activity in respective geographical areas of the United States**

**WEST**

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA**

There are indications that MS 13 may be present in Alaska. According to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), reports exist of members migrating to Los Angeles from Alaska. There have also been unconfirmed reports that Nelson Comandari travel to Alaska for reasons currently unknown. Nelson Comandari is an MS 13 leader and a highly influential Mexican Mafia (MM) associate collecting extortion money from various Hispanic street gangs in the Los Angeles area. While Alaska has not identified MS 13 as a major threat group at this time, the gang's possible existence in Alaska should be noted.
DENVER, COLORADO

Currently, it is unknown if MS 13 is an active gang in Colorado; however, members have been known to frequent the area. Confirmed reporting exists of Los Angeles-based members, to include Nelson Comandari, having a Colorado driver's license. The reason for this is being explored, but speculation is that Colorado has more lenient licensing requirements, and Colorado might be used as transit point.

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

According to the Reno, Nevada, Police Department, MS-13 was first identified in the area following a burglary arrest of a member in 1992. The gang's presence in Reno is attributed to members of the Hollywood clique migrating from Los Angeles. Most of the MS-13 members are reporting that they are El Salvadorean natives, while some are claiming origins in Nevada, California, Mexico and Guatemala. MS-13 members no longer appear to be divided by cliques. Although the gang appears to be relatively unorganized, there are attempts underway by the incarcerated members to organize the gang. Recruiting is being conducted in schools and neighborhoods.

Criminal activities include shootings, stabbings, robberies, burglary, drug trafficking, and larceny. Investigators are pursuing information suggesting that MS-13 member Jesus Chavez, who opened a new business in the Reno area, may be conducting illegal activities at his business. Chavez was previously investigated for methamphetamine distribution and dealing in stolen car stereos. It appears the MS-13 members are able to acquire weapons easily in Nevada and prefer the smaller weapons.

MS-13 members in the Reno area are now aligned with the Sunset Texas gang. They were previously rivals.

A Fairfax, Virginia, MS-13 member was arrested in Las Vegas, after fleeing from a homicide in Virginia. The connection between MS 13 members in Virginia and Nevada should be explored to determine if a network is developing between the Virginia MS 13 members and those in Nevada.
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

MS 13 is believed to have originated in Los Angeles when an influx of El Salvadorians fleeing their war torn country migrated to Los Angeles. In Los Angeles, El Salvadorians who were not accepted by other Latinos banded together to form MS 13. Intelligence indicates some of the newly established MS 13 members were trained by the military in El Salvador. They generally wear baggy clothing and jerseys with the number 22 or 13 on them. The number 22 may represent the weapon of choice (.22 caliber handguns) or may signify alliance with the Border Brothers prison gang. Los Angeles law enforcement has identified an increase in MS 13 members with tattoos on their face, neck, and hands. This level of tattooing is more common among members joining MS 13 in El Salvador. The different MS 13 cliques in Los Angeles appear to follow the general principal that all MS 13 members, regardless of their clique, are part of the same gang.

Criminal activities include homicides, drug trafficking, robberies, money laundering, assaults, and property crimes. LAPD has indicated MS 13 is laundering money through used cars lots. False Ids are common in the Los Angeles area and are possibly being used to obtain valid Ids at later dates. Investigators have reported the use of Colorado Ids in Los Angeles.

The 18th Street gang and MS 13 are rivals in Los Angeles and as a result have become historical rivals throughout the US and in EL Salvador with few exceptions. Most recently, it appears that the Coronado Locos Salvatrucha a traditional MS 13 clique is being replaced with the Rampart Locos. There is information that the Coronado clique has fallen out of favor with MS 13, and there is a "green light" (or a hit) on the clique's members. LAPD had identified new Rampart Locos members from Virginia and Alaska. Members from the Rampart clique appear to be organizing against Nelson Comandari. Reports indicate that several members have come to question Comandari’s leadership and doubt Comandari was actually ever jumped into the gang. Currently, MS 13 and the MM are aligned. LAPD information indicates that the MM calls the shots for the MS 13 in California. However, El Salvadorians-based MS 13 members appear to have started calling shots for MS 13 in Los Angeles.

LAPD has identified children of MS 13 members being raised to be MS 13 members. This next generation of MS 13 members may be more of a threat to law enforcement as they become more violent to protect their territories.

Los Angeles-based MS 13 subjects have been identified in Massachusetts, North Carolina, New York, Oklahoma, and Virginia.
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

According the NDIC, recent information indicates that MS 13 members may be moving into the Yuma, area. Law enforcement personnel should become aware of the gang identifiers. It has been noted that MS 13 members will frequently move or expand into areas where their presence seems less noticed by law enforcement.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

According to investigators from the San Francisco Police Department, Norteños and Sureños are the two main umbrella gangs in San Francisco. MS 13 falls under the Sureños umbrella.

Criminal activities include auto theft, drug trafficking, and manufacturing false Ids. MS 13 members are involved in territorial disputes with rival gangs. MS 13 use firearms, bottles, and blunt objects as their primary weapons. Many of the MS 13 members have legitimate employment but are still active in the gang.

It appears Sur 13 is backed by the MM. MS 13 members in the San Francisco area do not seem to know much about the MM, even though they are supposed to be backed by the gang. Now that MS 13 has aligned with a previous rival, the 19th Street cliques, law enforcement has seen an increase in violence.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

According to investigators from the King County Jail, MS 13 recruits from other gangs and schools. Currently, membership in the Seattle area is estimated at 150. MS 13 members wear blue as their color. Juan Carlos Aguilar is an alleged leader in the MS 13 group in Seattle. The owner of the Tropicana nightclub, Jose "PAPA" Mendoza, is allegedly an MS 13 shot caller and an MM associate, who uses his club to conduct MS 13 meetings. Chris Rodriguez is another alleged shot caller in the Seattle area.

Criminal activity includes drug trafficking. MS 13 member Douglas Guerra has been associated with the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club in British Columbia and in the Seattle area.

There is also information that deported El Salvadoreans may try to re-enter the US through Canada. Seattle's proximity to locations where MS 13 has been established in British Columbia increases the potential of MS 13 members returning to the US through Seattle. Law enforcement personnel working these areas should be familiar with the identifiers of MS 13 and information regarding deported individuals who may be connected to MS 13 subjects in the Seattle area.
MIDWEST

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

FBI Chicago does not report an existing MS 13 problem; however, MS 13 members in other localities have been known to claim the Chicago area as their city of origin. Specifically, some members in Nashville, Tennessee reported that they migrated from Chicago. Information obtained by the Dawson County, Nebraska, Sheriff’s Department indicates that MS 13 member Roman Castillo has ties to the Chicago area.

Castillo is believed to have been involved in motor vehicle theft. The vehicles are stolen, at the owners' request, then burned in order to file fraudulent insurance claims. One of the vehicles reported stolen in Nebraska was found burned in Chicago at the same time Castillo was supposed to be in the Chicago area.

DES MOINES, IOWA

Des Moines Police Department and surrounding areas have identified the presence of MS 13 members. During an investigation, Des Moines Police Department located and confiscated a machete located between the front seats of the suspect's vehicle. The driver of the vehicle was identified as an MS member. At the time of the conference, Des Moines was still in the process of identifying the totality of MS 13’s presence in Iowa.

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

According to investigators from the Indianapolis Police Department, MS 13 members in the area indicate they joined the gang in Mexico and Honduras. MS 13 is reportedly attempting to align with SUR 13 in the Indianapolis area. The gang's criminal activities include drug trafficking and homicides. One MS 13 member reportedly possessed an AK-47, which poses concerns for law enforcement.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

MS 13’s presence in the Kansas City area is minimal. Its existence is primarily based on subjects fleeing the Fort Smith, Arkansas area following the commission of a crime. The reason they have chosen this particular locality is unknown and should be investigated.
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

According to Dawson County, Nebraska, Sheriff’s Department, MS 13 was first encountered in the area in 1992 when members were arrested in conjunction with Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) switching activities. Following the arrests, members began to conceal their identifiers to avoid attention. MS 13 members in Nebraska are primarily from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Criminal activities include money making schemes involving automobiles, and to a lesser degree drug trafficking and the manufacture of false IDs. Initially, MS 13 members were stealing them in the Omaha area. They expanded the VIN switching scheme to include salvage cars, altering VINs, and selling them to unsuspecting buyers. MS 13 members were also reportedly involved in insurance fraud, wherein, the owner hires MS 13 members to steal vehicles and set them on fire. Thereafter, the owner will share the insurance money with the MS 13 member.

NORTHEAST

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

According to investigators from the Massachusetts State Police, the Boston Police Department, and the Chelsea Police Department, MS 13 was first observed in the Boston area in 1998. In the last seven to eight years, there has been an influx of El Salvadorians into the Boston area. MS 13 is described as the most violent gang in east Boston and was the most prominent gang until several MS 13 members were arrested, resulting in 23 convictions and 14 deportations. The alleged leader, Giovanni Aguilar, is scheduled to be deported which will result in a leadership change. As a result of the arrests, MS 13's rival - 18th Street is becoming the most prominent gang in the area. It appears that MS 13's reputation for violence continues to prevent other gangs, including 18th Street, from entering areas still dominated by MS 13.

Criminal activities include aggravated assault, witness intimidation, auto theft, residential and commercial burglary, street robbery, alien smuggling (to replace gang members), and drug trafficking. MS 13 members in the Boston area appear to prefer machetes or knives over firearms.

MS 13 members facing charges in Massachusetts have been apprehended in other cities and states, to include Los Angeles and northern Virginia. Additional intelligence is needed to identify the possible network used by MS 13 members when fleeing Massachusetts to avoid prosecution.

Recent information indicates that Providence, Rhode Island, is showing an increase in MS 13 members. This increase, or migration to Providence, is likely due to law enforcement's aggressive efforts in the Boston area, and MS 13's efforts to expand the gang.
New York, New York

According to law enforcement reporting, MS 13 is prominent in the New York area. The gang is reportedly operating in Suffolk, Nassau, Brentwood and Hempstead Counties. Members are identifying blue and black as their primary colors. They have been seen wearing the white military belt with the strap hanging down the leg and "MS" on the buckle and sports paraphernalia with the number 13. There are more than 500 members identified in Hempstead. Females are allowed into MS 13 in New York with the exception of Hempstead alone. Hempstead females involved with the gang appear as associates or girlfriends of members. The gang in New York has included Guatemalans, Hondurans, Ecuadorians, and African Americans. The Brentwood clique attempts to hold weekly meetings and universals once a year. Information indicates that during meetings, MS 13 members will employ counter-surveillance measures. Overall, the New York cliques are not automatically aligned and do not seem organized. Suffolk County has a new set of former Hempstead members, who are trying to broker a truce and coordinate the different cliques.

Criminal activities include homicides, assaults, robberies, drug trafficking, extortion, and intimidation. The intimidation of witnesses and citizens is prominent in Hempstead. MS 13 members control clubs in the Hempstead area and have been known to "patrol" the areas between the clubs to extort money from unsuspecting club patrons. Hempstead is the primary location used for drug trafficking activities, which has created a competition between the cliques vying for money derived from drug sales. The Hempstead MS 13 clique proposes taxing other gangs to traffic drugs in its territory.

New York investigators reported that one officer's leg was broken with a pipe during a fight with MS 13 members, and several death threats have been documented against officers. There have been reports that MS 13 members were conducting surveillance on task force officers. An MS 13 member advised officers that he was tasked with following one of the task force officers home. The information provided by the member about the route and the officer's vehicle was corroborated by the officer. One MS 13 subject was deported after admitting he plotted to kill an officer in Nassau, by placing a bogus police call. The officer was targeted due to his efforts against the gang. A weapon and car were recovered before the subject was able to execute the plan. The MS 13 member was identified as a former military officer in El Salvador.

Salvadorians With Pride (SWP) is an MS 13 rival in Hempstead. It appears that the Hempstead clique is aligned with the Brentwood MS 13 clique, Long Beach (Nassau County) MS 13 clique, and the Crips. Intelligence indicates that MS 13 and the Vatos Locos are rival gangs. The Virginia MS 13 and Brentwood MS 13 cliques communicate and travel between jurisdictions. Subjects from Fairfax, Virginia, have been identified by law enforcement and sources as operating with the Hempstead clique.

MS 13 appears to be recruiting in high schools, middle schools, and some elementary schools. The junior members reportedly carry weapons and drugs, and are prone to violence as they are trying to develop their gang status.

The North side clique allegedly has ties to Los Angeles and considers itself above the others. The members are a little older than the other cliques' members, and three are allegedly from Los Angeles.

Suffolk MS 13 members have been known to flee to Virginia, North Carolina, California, and other areas of New York after committing crimes. The ties to these areas have not been identified. Nashville, Tennessee investigators have stated they are also seeing MS 13 members migrating from New York.
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

According to investigative reporting, there are about 13 counties in New Jersey that are experiencing MS 13 activity. Atlantic County (Ventor) was the most recently observed expansion of MS 13 activity. North Plainfield is seeing an increase in MS 13 members. MS 13 members allegedly hold monthly meetings, possibly on the 13th of the month, moving to different counties to prevent law enforcement intervention. The organizational structure in New Jersey appears to revolve around business as opposed to being territorial. There appears to be an umbrella structure with La Gran Familia Mexicana. MS 13 members in New Jersey are reportedly claiming Sureño membership. The MS 13 members in New Jersey are hiding their gang identifiers in brims and inner band of baseball caps and inside belts and pockets.

Criminal activities include assaults, homicides, extortion, robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution, and intimidation. Plainfield Locos Salvatruchos (PLS) in Middlesex County is based out Union County and active in Summersonet County, South Plainfield, and Plainfield. PLS members are believed to have taken over the DeSoto Restaurant in New Jersey for drug trafficking activities. Reports indicate that in another bar across the street, drug sales are being controlled by the Latin Kings. To date, there has been no conflict between the two groups. Source recruitment can be difficult due to past criminal histories and reliability of potential sources as well as threats by gang members to business owners. Surveillance can also be difficult due to the gangs counter-surveillance measures to include use of lookouts or frequent movement of drug trafficking locations. In Berkley County, there were two prostitution houses being run my MS 13.

In Elizabeth, New Jersey, a dispute involving MS 13 members began in a local bar. An off-duty officer in the bar was identified by the bartender during the dispute. The officer was attacked and stabbed approximately six times causing serious injury.

Juan Portilla, aka "Spider," claiming to be a member of the Trece Locos Salvatruchos (TLS) MS 13 clique, allegedly came from Massachusetts and facilitated the alignment between La Gran Familia and MS 13 in Ocean County. Spider has since been deported. In jail, MS 13 members have aligned wit the 18th Street gang to protect themselves against The Bloods.
WASHINGTON, DC METROPOLITAN AREA

According to information from the Fairfax County and Prince George's County Police Departments, as well as other local law enforcement agencies, MS 13 was first observed in the Quantico, Virginia area. Three members, supposedly from Los Angeles relocated to Virginia with the goal of joining the all-Hispanic gangs under MS 13. MS 13 is now the largest gang in Fairfax, Virginia. MS 13 members in the Washington, DC area appear to follow at least a minimal organizational structure with a leader and a treasurer. MS 13 members traditionally wear baggy pants and shirts; white sleeves T-shirts, blue and white jerseys, belt buckles with MS 13, blue and white beads, New York Yankees ball caps, and concealed bandanas. It was reported that black clothing worn by MS 13 members in Washington, DC, represents a higher-ranking member that the traditional blue color.

MS 13 members in Fairfax, Virginia, are shaving their eyebrows and occasionally shave an X and /or III in their eyebrows. The cliques allegedly hold meetings once a week. An "all clique" meeting is held the last Sunday of the month. Fairfax County has identified 18 different MS 13 cliques, while Prince George's County has identified four possible MS 13 cliques. Recruiting occurs at "skip parties," where gang members encourage high school students to skip school to attend parties. At the parties, young women were being coerced to join the gang by being "sexed in," or raped should they refuse. The particular initiation rite is becoming less frequent as law enforcement has successfully prosecuted gang members engaging in this activity. If females want to join the gang, they are now being "jumped in" in the same manner as males.

Criminal activities include homicide, robbery, auto theft, assault, rapes, burglary, and drug trafficking. Letters intercepted by the Virginia Department of Corrections were addressed to subjects in Texas, indicating a network between these states. A letter was also intercepted in the prison system that indicated and alliance with La Gran Familia.

In 2002, MS 13 members assaulted a Montgomery County, Maryland, officer and a Prince George's canine officer. The reports of assaults and threats against police officers appears to be higher among the MS 13 cliques on the East Coast.

MS 13's biggest rival is the 18th Street gang. In Prince George's County the Vatos Locos street gang is aligned with MS 13.

Washington, DC, metropolitan MS 13 members appear to be traveling to other states including Massachusetts, Texas, New York, Florida, North Carolina, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Maryland, New Jersey, and Oklahoma. This indicates a multi-state network, which provides safe havens for fugitives fleeing the area. Any intelligence on the connections between MS 13 members nationwide may increase the arrest of fugitive.
According to FBI Atlanta and Gwinnett County investigators, there are an estimated 200 MS 13 members in the Atlanta metropolitan area attempting to be one of the predominate gangs. Organizational structure consists of a leader, a treasurer, and coordinator of drug trafficking operations. Members tend to wear clothing with the number 13 and / or color blue. The Majority of MS 13 members in the Atlanta area are El Salvadorians and Mexican nationals; however, its membership also includes individuals from Puerto Rico, Honduras, Guatemala, Peru, Dominican Republic, Cuba and Costa Rica. Recruiting in the Atlanta metropolitan area occurs in schools, malls and nightclubs.

Criminal activities include weapons and drug trafficking, murder, drive by shootings, assaults, and property crimes. Drugs are allegedly purchased from street gangs, and Colombian and Mexican criminal groups, operating in New York, New Jersey, Texas, and California.

Intelligence indicates MS 13 members conduct weekly meetings, usually on Saturdays. At one meeting, law enforcement observed approximately 15 members apparently collecting dues and donations for an incarcerated member.

The Subjects below are wanted in an MS 13 related homicide that occurred on 04/13/03, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Fidel Martinez, Julio Ramirez, Donald Alexander Magana Flores, and Carlos Misael Orellana. Magana was arrested on 05/15/03, in Newport, Minnesota. It is believed that other subjects may have fled to the Atlanta area.

According to investigators from the Fayetteville Police Department, Raleigh Police Department, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police, law enforcement became aware of MS 13's presence in North Carolina in 1999, when approximately 12 members were identified. Brian Sanchez, aka Christian Flores, is the alleged leader of the North Carolina MS 13 clique.

According to law enforcement, many of the members operating in North Carolina claim that they joined the gang while in their respective country of origin. Some also claim to maintain close liaison with gang and family members in their country of origin.

Criminal activities include manslaughter, murder, armed robbery, burglaries, rape, drug trafficking, alien smuggling, and prostitution. Source information indicates adult women are being smuggled into the US from South America under the pretense that they will be provided legitimate jobs; however, they are forced into prostitution. Information indicates they are initially taken to New York and then transferred to prostitution houses in North Carolina.

The gang is allegedly conducting meetings where dues are collected and used as bond money for incarcerated members. Unconfirmed reporting also suggests that some MS 13 members may hold legitimate jobs, working as contractors and grocery store clerks.

MS 13 in Charlotte appears to be targeting 18th Street, 42nd Street, Little Criminals, SUR 13, and Brown Pride members. Rivals of the MS 13 clique in Durham are SUR 13 and United Blood Nation. MS 13 appears to be aligned with the Orphans, and Orange County, California based gang, and the Mad Hondurans (MH). Charlotte's Honduran and El Salvador population has divided in that some Hondurans allegedly separated from MS 13 over a disagreement and formed MH.
DALLAS, TEXAS

According to investigators from the Carrollton, Texas, Police Department, MS 13 members in the Dallas area were first encountered in 1996. MS 13 has the largest gang presence in the Dallas area with approximately 180 members. Most of the members purport to have migrated from the Virginia area wearing the color blue to identify themselves. The MS 13 cliques in the area include: the Directa Loco Salvatruchas (DLS), who appear to be the dominated MS 13 clique in the Dallas area; the Carrollton Farmers Branch Locos Salvatrucha (CFBLS), allegedly lead by Jose Oliver Gonzalez, aka Spider; the clique Loco Salvatrucha; Chilangeras Loco Salvatrucha; and the "NDLS" (Unknown acronym). CFBSL supposedly has lost favor with the other MS 13 cliques, as it does not appear to follow the rules. As a result, law enforcement may see an increase of violence between the cliques.

Investigations indicate connections between Fairfax, Virginia, MS 13 members and Carrollton, Texas, members. Letters were intercepted by the Virginia Department of Corrections. Allegedly, MS 13 members from Fairfax, Virginia, have traveled to the Dallas, Texas area to help form new cliques and provide some leadership to the gang.

Criminal activities include the production of false identifications (Ids.), auto theft (a vehicle stolen in Carrollton, Texas was located in Virginia), and drug trafficking. MS 13 members in Atlanta, Georgia, are allegedly using females to pick up shipments from Texas and move to the Carolinas or the District of Columbia.

Any gang who carries the term "North" in its name appears to be a rival of MS 13 in the Dallas area. For example the Vatos Northside (VNS) is a rival gang that is allegedly using the number 13 which is infuriating MS 13. There have been several shootings involving gang members; however, only a few have resulted in death.

According to investigators in the Fort Smith, Arkansas, Police Department, MS 13 members fleeing the area after committing crimes are reportedly moving to the Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas area. Forth Smith MS 13 members are also reportedly migrating through Texas from El Salvador. The connections between these locations have not been identified at the time of this report and should be explored.

Intelligence indicates that Comandari has out-of-state driver's licenses as well as a Social Security card issued in Texas. Comandari has been known to travel to numerous states throughout the United States (US) conducting gang-related business. Comandari is married to Inez Trujillo who resides in California.
According to Houston Police Department investigators, MS 13 members do not identify themselves as individual cliques or use black as their gang color. Most of Houston's gang members are reportedly from Los Angeles, California. Fidel Antonio Gracias, the leader of a northern Houston clique is currently wanted (NCIC #W900907857) for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in Houston, Texas. According to FBI information from 1997, Gracias was the leader of the Greenspoint clique of MS13. On 10/27/96, Gracias shot Carlos Israel Mejia five times for not following orders; however, he survived the shootings.

Criminal activities include robberies, homicides, and assaults. In 1998, there were reported incidents of MS 13 members assaulting or threatening Houston police officers. MS 13 members also victimize individuals who could likely testify against the group, including elderly and illegal immigrants fearing arrest and deportation.

MS 13 in the Houston area generally does not conflict with rival gangs. However, with the release of several MS 13 members from incarceration in the next nine months, local law enforcement is expecting an increase in activity.

Nelson Comandari is believed to frequent Houston, Texas, and may be associated with the Border Brother prison gang in Houston. Comandari also has a social security card that was issued in Texas.
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

According to Forth Smith, Arkansas, Police Department, MS 13 members were first identified in the area in 1999. Current membership is estimated at 50. Most migrated from El Salvador, while some members indicated that they originated from Los Angeles. Law enforcement has not seen MS 13 displaying any particular colors; however, the members generally wear black clothing.

Criminal activities include property crimes, homicides, drive by shootings and drug trafficking. The National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) reported that MS 13 is distributing cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin in smaller quantities in Arkansas. Weapons often used are pistols, machetes, and knives. On 3/30/03, Juan Ramirez, a Florencia 13 member, was killed in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. MS 13 member Pedro Milton Barahona-Ortiz was arrested and charged with the murder. As a result of the shooting there has been an increase in violence between MS 13 and Florencia 13 members.

Individuals claiming 18th Street gang membership appear to be associated with MS 13 members. The cooperation between 18th Street and MS 13 is rare as historically the two gangs are rivals. The main rivalry in Forth Smith appears to be between MS 13 and Florencia 13.

MS 13 members, fleeing the Forth Smith area after committing crimes, are reportedly moving to Kansas and to the Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas area. The connection to these locations is unknown.

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

According to FBI Nashville and the Davidson County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Office, there are approximately 174 MS 13 members based within their jurisdictions. However, only 60 to 70 of the members are active. They wear blue as the gang color. Oscar Serrano was identified as the leader of the MS 13 group in the Nashville area. Serrano is incarcerated, but is scheduled to be released from prison in the near future. Nashville MS 13 members are reporting origins in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

Criminal activities include identity and credit card theft, robbery, assault, murder, drug trafficking, and domestic violence. Reportedly, MS 13 members travel frequently between Tennessee and Nebraska.

Alleged reports exist of well-executed, military-style, robberies committed in the Nashville area by MS 13 members; one of the theft groups was allegedly from Central America with ties to MS 13 members.

MS 13 members only reported rivals are Asians gangs in the area. MS 13 is allegedly attempting to run the Asian gangs out of the Nashville area.
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

According to Oklahoma City Police Department, there are 13 Hispanic gangs with 598 identified members in the area. MS 13 members were first identified in Oklahoma City in 1997, and claim to be affiliates of the Hollywood clique in California.

Criminal activities include possession of illegal weapons (knives and firearms) and auto theft. Mauricio Serrato, an MS 13 member claiming to be from Washington, DC, was arrested on Oklahoma City on Auto theft charges. Serrato was in the company of a Grande Barrio Centrale member in a stolen vehicle when he was arrested. The Grande Barrio Centrale is known to be involved in drug trafficking.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

According to investigators from the Richmond, Virginia, Police Department, the earliest known presence of MS 13 in the area was 1998. MS 13 has begun to expand to bordering counties near Richmond. There are at least three documented cliques: Coronado Locos Salvatruchos, from Los Angeles and New York; Centrales Locos Salvatruchos from Los Angeles; and Silva Locos Salvatruchos from Los Angeles, claiming to have come from Virginia to start a new life. There is also a large influx in Richmond of North Carolina MS 13 members to further their criminal activities.

Criminal activities include assaults, residential and commercial burglaries, intimidation, and larceny from autos, prostitution, and armed robberies.

An MS 13 member wanted in Los Angeles, Jose Vidal Culajay, aka Oscar Armando Perez-Paz, was running a drywall business known as Manpower in Chesterfield County when he was arrested. According to FBI information Perez-Paz was arrested in Chesterfield County, Virginia, August 2000, for parole violations and extradited to California. Reportedly, Perez-Paz was selling firearms and explosives. If additional information about the weapons and MS 13’s involvement can be developed, it may help determine whether there is a more extensive network of MS 13 involvement in weapons trafficking.
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Terrorism and the Mara Salvatrucha

On September 28, 2004, an article by The Washington Times, entitled "Al-Qaeda Seeks Tie to Local Gangs," by: Jerry Seper, has brought much public attention to the issue of terrorism and street gangs working together. This article has been reprinted verbatim follow by an analysis.

Al-Qaeda Seeks Tie to Local Gangs
By: Jerry Seper, The Washington Times

A top Al Qaeda lieutenant has met with leaders of a violent Salvadorians criminal gang with roots in Mexico and the United States - including a stronghold in the Washington area - in an effort by the terrorist network to seek help infiltrating the U.S.-Mexico border, law enforcement authorities said. Adnan G. El Shukrijumah, a key al Qaeda cell leader for whom the U.S. government has offered a $5 million reward, was spotted in July in Honduras meeting with leaders of El Salvador's notorious Mara Salvatrucha gang, which immigration officials said has smuggled hundreds of Central and South Americans - mostly gang members - into the United States. Although they are actively involved in alien, drug and weapons smuggling, Mara Salvatrucha members in America also have been tied to numerous killings, robberies, burglaries, carjackings, extortions, rapes and aggravated assaults - including at least seven killings in Virginia and a machete attack on a 16-year-old in Alexandria that severely mutilated his hands. The Salvadorean gang, known to law enforcement authorities as MS-13 because many members identify themselves with tattoos of the number 13, is thought to have established a major smuggling center in Matamoros, Mexico, just south of Brownsville, Texas, from where it has arranged to bring illegal aliens from countries other than Mexico into the United States. Authorities said al Qaeda terrorists hope to take advantage of a lack of detention space within the Department of Homeland Security that has forced immigration officials to release non-Mexican illegal aliens back into the United States, rather than return them to their home countries. Less than 15 percent of those released appear for immigration hearings. Nearly 60,000 illegal aliens designated as other-than-Mexican, or OTMs, were detained last year along the U.S.-Mexico border. El Shukrijumah, born in Saudi Arabia but thought to be a Yemeni national, was spotted in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in July, having crossed the border illegally from Nicaragua after a stay in Panama. U.S. authorities said al Qaeda operatives have been in Tegucigalpa planning attacks against British, Spanish and U.S. embassies. Known to carry passports from Saudi Arabia, Trinidad, Guyana and Canada, El Shukrijumah had sought meetings with the Mara Salvatrucha gang leaders who control alien-smuggling routes through Mexico and into the United States. El Shukrijumah, 29, who authorities said was in Canada last year looking for nuclear material for a so-called "dirty bomb" and reportedly has family members in Guyana, was named in a March 2003 material-witness arrest warrant by federal prosecutors in Northern Virginia, where U.S. Attorney Paul J. McNulty said he is sought in connection with potential terrorist threats against the United States. A former southern Florida resident and pilot thought to have helped plan the September 11 attacks, El Shukrijumah was among seven suspected al Qaeda operatives identified in May by Attorney General John Ashcroft as being involved in plans to strike new targets in the United States. Citing "credible intelligence from multiple sources," Mr. Ashcroft said at the time that El Shukrijumah posed "a clear and present danger to America." In August, an FBI alert described him as "armed and dangerous" and a major threat to homeland security. Earlier this month, Mr. Ashcroft confirmed that U.S. border agents and inspectors had ramped up efforts to find El Shukrijumah amid reports that the al Qaeda leader was thought to be seeking entry routes into the United States along the U.S.-Mexico border. Mr. Ashcroft noted that increased enforcement efforts were under way in the wake of a rise of arrests of border jumpers from Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Authorities said Mara Salvatrucha gang members moved into the Los Angeles area in the 1980s and developed a reputation for being organized and extremely violent. The gang since has expanded into the Washington area, including Virginia and Maryland, and into Oregon, Alaska, Texas, Nevada, Utah, Oklahoma, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Georgia and Florida. More than 3,000 Mara Salvatrucha gang members are thought to be in the Washington area, with a
major operation in Northern Virginia. Other gang centers, authorities said, include Montgomery and Prince George's counties and the Hispanic neighborhoods of Washington. Mr. McNulty, whose office has prosecuted Mara Salvatrucha gang members, has described the organization as the "gang of greatest interest" to law enforcement authorities. He said gang members are recruited predominantly from Hispanic communities and typically among juveniles, some as young as 13. Recruits are "jumped" into the gang by being beaten by members while others count to 13, he said. Gang rules, he said, are indoctrinated into new recruits and ruthlessly enforced. Those who cooperate with law enforcement are given the "green light," he said, meaning that the gang had approved their killing. In March, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office filed an injunction against Mara Salvatrucha, charging that the gang's criminal activity constituted a "public nuisance" based on the number of killings, robberies and drug crimes. The injunction requires gang members, under public nuisance statutes, to follow curfew rules and regulations and prohibits them from associating, driving or appearing together in designated areas of the city.

Terrorism and the Mara Salvatrucha continued

Analysis

While MS-13 members are known to work with other criminal enterprises in order to further the gang's illicit operations, there are several reasons to believe that MS-13 members are not cooperating with Al-Qaeda.

- Recent media reports allege that Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang members met with Al-Qaeda operative El-Shukri Jumah, in Honduras last July, and that Al-Qaeda financed a MS-13 gang summit. Three is no independent reporting to support these reports.

- Later media reports quoted a former FBI Agent as stating that he had heard "rumors" that the MS-13 meeting had been financed by Al-Qaeda and other reports indicated that Al-Qaeda wanted to use MS-13 members to smuggled Al-Qaeda individuals across the United States (U.S.) borders.

- Central American gang investigators and U.S. law enforcement agencies pursued information about the July 2003 meeting and allegations about related border concerns, but found no corroboration or evidence to support the claims related to El-Shukri Jumah's and/or Al-Qaeda involvement.

- Following the events of September 11, 2001, the ability of gang members and drug cartels to travel between the U.S. and other countries became more difficult. Facilitating terrorist activity would probably further difficulties for the gang to move drugs, money, and individuals in and out of the U.S.

- Al-Qaeda, as a radical fundamentalist Islamic movement, has generally confined its dealing to muslin groups and MS-13 member's origins suggest many of them are of the Christian faith. MS-13 members have frequently displayed tattoos, and worn rosary beads that show their Christian religious beliefs.

Although unlikely that Al-Qaeda would seek assistance from MS-13 members, it should be noted that, it is reasonable to suggest that because MS-13 has become successful of gaining control at some of the borders, Al-Qaeda could have made contact with the gang in an effort to do so for financial reasons. It is believe that terrorists would pay as much as ten times that of what your average illegal alien looking to seek entrance into the United States would pay. It should also be noted that there is at least one example of state-sponsored terrorist working with a U.S. street gang. In 1986, members of the El Rukn street gang in Chicago plotted with Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi to perpetrate terrorist acts against the United States in exchange for money. Intelligence also indicates that if MS-13 were to become involved, they likely to do so for financial reasons.
Law Enforcement Response

February 04, 2004, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, in a press released announced the arrest of 30 Leaders and Members of Three Violent Street Gangs on Long Island Charge with Five Murders, Firebombing and Violence

Initial appearances and arraignments for the defendants arrested today (February 04, 2004) are scheduled this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge William D. Wall, at the U.S. Courthouse, Central Islip, New York.

La Mara Salvatrucha ("THE MS-13")

The MS-13 engages in a variety of violent criminal activity, including murder, assault, rape, firearms offenses, cocaine distribution and robbery. Much of the violent criminal activity is directed at rival gangs, including the Salvadorians with pride ("SWP"), the Latin Kings and the Bloods.

The charges against members of The MS-13 include:

The Egardo Sanchez Homicide. Leonel Mejia and Mario R. Zuniga are charge with the shooting murder of 19-year-old Egardo Sanchez in North Massapequa, New York, on September 13, 2003. The investigation revealed that Mejia and Zunigan murdered Sanchez, an MS-13 member himself, because they believe he had provided law enforcement authorities with information about the criminal activities of other MS-13 members.

The Jesus Valentin Homicide. Josue Otonel Rubi-Gonzalez and Oscar Alexander Ortega-Aroujo are charged with the murder of 22-year-old Jesus Valentin in Central Islip, New York, on July 3, 2003. The investigation revealed that Rubi-Gonzalez and Ortega-Aroujo lured the victim into a wooded area off Lowell Avenue, and then rapidly stabbed him. On November 15, 2003, Rubi-Gonzalez led investigator to Valentin remains. Rubi-Gonzalez and Ortega-Aroujo committed the murder because they believe Valentin to be a member of the Latin Kings.

The Jaime Figueroa Homicide. JOHNY A. RODAS and MARIO JIMENEZ are charged with the murder of 18-year-old Jaime Figueroa in Freeport, New York, on February 23, 2003. The investigation revealed that, while traveling in a car driven by JIMENEZ, RODAS fired several rounds into a car being driven by Figueroa, killing Figueroa and seriously injuring his passenger. In post-arrest statements, RODAS and JIMENEZ stated that Figueroa was murdered because they believe him to be a member of the Salvadorians With Pride.
The Commack Cinema Stabbings. On August 16, 2003 JOSUE OTONIEL RUBI-GONZALEZ, OSCAR ALEXANDER ORTEGA-AROUJO and WALTER YANES beat and stabbed three men in a brawl at the Commack Cinema in Commack, New York. Prior to the attack, the defendant identified themselves as MS-13 members.

The White Van Shootings. On June 18, 2003 LEDWIN CASTRO, RALPH ADMETTRE, DAVIS VASQUEZ and a fourth MS-13 member conducted two drive-by shootings. In the first attack two men were shot near the Laundry Palace on Clinton Street in Hempstead. The defendants believe those victims to be members of the SWP. In the second attack a man was shot on Main Street in Freeport. The defendants believe the victim to be a member of the Bloods.

Peninsula Boulevard Attempted Murder. On February 14, 2003, JESUS MAGANA attempted to murder an SWP member on Peninsula Boulevard in Hempstead, New York. MAGANA fired several shots at the victim at close range using a .25 caliber Beretta semi-automatic pistol. One bullet struck the victim head.

The Ambis III Lounge Beating. On January 23, 2003, JUAN REYES and other members of the MS-13 Hempstead clique severely beat a bounce at The Ambis III Lounge in Hempstead, striking him with a baseball bat, a bar stool and bottles after he asked them for proof of their ages. According to witnesses, just before the attack one assailant stated, "We're La Mara, we don't show ID." The victim has remained hospitalized in a coma since the attack.

The 299 Jackson Street Shooting. On April 5, 2002, WILLIAM REYES and other MS-13 members conducted a drive-by shooting near 299 Jackson Street in Hempstead, New York. REYES and his co-conspirators wounded two men with a shotgun, allegedly because one was member of the SWP, while the second was an SWP associate. Prior to the attack, REYES and other MS-13 members flashed traditional MS-13 hand signs and shouted "La Mara," so that the victims would know who was shooting at them.

The Fulton Avenue Shooting Conspiracy. On August 18, 2000, EDGAR MARQUEZ-LARIOS directed two other members of the MS-13 Hempstead clique to shoot at a group of individuals standing in front of an apartment building located on Fulton Avenue, Hempstead because MARQUEZ-LARIOS believed that the intended victims were rival gang members. MARQUEZ-LARIOS conducted a "rehearsal run" during which he provided the would-be shooters with detailed instructions concerning the drive-by shooting and escape. MARQUEZ-LARIOS then gave his co-conspirators a loaded revolver. Fortunately, surveillance officers from the Nassau County and Hempstead Police Department apprehended the two MS-13 members two blocks from the apartment building.

Additional MS-13 Defendants. In addition to the defendants named above, there are six other MS-13 members facing federal charges. LUIS RAUDALES-CALIX, a Freeport MS-13 member, is indicted for conspiracy to commit robbery, possession of a loaded defaced firearm by a convicted felon, and illegal re-entry into the United States following deportation. GUADALUPE LIZAMA is charged with possession of a loaded and defaced firearm. SANTOS OSMIN BLANCO-BENITEZ, EDWIN CABALLEROS-ESPINAL, MARVI PEREIRA and GEZER SANTOS-MEJIA are charged with illegal re-entry into the United States following deportation.

Maximum Sentences. If convicted the MS-13 defendants face the following sentences:

LEONEL MEJIA and MARIO ZUNIGA - life imprisonment, or death based upon their participation in the Sanchez homicide.

JOSUE OTONIEL RUBI-GONZALEZ and OSCAR ALEXANDER ORTEGA-AROUJO - life imprisonment, or death, based upon their participation in the Valentin homicide.
JOHNNY A. RODAS and MARIO JIMENEZ - life imprisonment, or death, based upon their participation in the Figueroa homicide.

LEDWIN CASTRO, RALPH ADMETTRE, DAVIS VASQUEZ, WILLIAM REYES, JESUS MAGANA and LUIS RAUDALES-CALIX - life imprisonment.

WALTER V.YANES, JUAN REYES, SANTOS OSMIN BLANCO-BENITEZ, EDWING CABALLEROS-ESPINAL, MARVIN PEREIRA and GEZER SANTOS-MEJEIA - 20 years imprisonment.

EDGAR MARQUEZ-LARIOS - eight years imprisonment.

GUADALUPE LIZAMA - five-year imprisonment.

City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, LAPD target Mara Salvatrucha for Gang Injunction

Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, joined by council member Ed P. Reyes and LAPD Chief William Bratton, announced details of a lawsuit seeking an injunction against the Mara Salvatrucha gang, which has been linked to 18 murders in the last two years.

"Residents of the Rampart and East Hollywood communities have been subjected to fear, threats and senseless violent criminal activity in their neighborhoods for too long," "The killing must stop, the terror must end. Said Delgadillo at a news conference at Lafayette Park.

The injunction would restrict Mara Salvatrucha gang members from participating in gang-related activities inside the "safety zones" in two separate areas west of downtown Los Angeles. The "safety zones," which together encompass the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office are patrolled by officers in LAPD's Rampart, Hollywood, Northeast and Wilshire division.

The restrictions would prohibit gang members from publicly associating with other members, loitering, intimidating community members, and collecting extortion money, "rent" or "taxes" from residents and business owners to avoid harassment.

The injunction, filed March 9 in Los Angeles Superior Court, prohibits Mara Salvatrucha gang members from the following activities within the Safety Zone:

- Association with other Mara Salvatrucha members in public;
- Intimidating any person in any way for any reason;
- Trespassing on private property;
- Engaging in graffiti activity or possessing graffiti tools;
- Possessing any drugs or drug related paraphernalia;
- Possessing any alcoholic beverage in public;
- Carrying any weapons or objects commonly used as weapons;
- Extorting money, including collecting "rent" or "taxes"

Raid targets ambition of Salvadorean gang
Dozens arrested in 2-day sweep

Two days of raids spanning several communities ended last night with the arrest of dozens of members of the Salvadorean street gang MS-13 and other gang members on drug, assault, and weapons charges, police said. The group primarily based in East Boston, Chelsea, Revere, Everett, Somerville and Lynn was targeted, because its members are on the brinks of instigating a gang war in a quest to cement its power as the area's dominant gang.

According to officials, police intelligence shows that MS-13 is determined to consolidate its power by wiping out its less-entrenched rivals, including the Bloods, a Hispanic gang known as the 18th Street, and a Haitian gang called D Block, which is also based in Chelsea and surrounding communities. Traditionally, MS-13 and other North Shore gangs have used sticks and knives as weapons, but that is quickly changing as turf wars escalate. Two gang-related shootings have occurred in East Boston in recent months. MS-13 members were involved in both of them, police said.

"We are worried about the increase in violence and the increase in gun activity were seeing," said Captain Keith Houghton, who runs the Chelsea Police Department's gang unit. A large portion of street robberies and home invasions throughout the North Shore are attributable to MS-13 and their counterparts. Many of the gang members are here illegally and will face deportation.

According to police, several of the men arrested in the raids are extremely violent. For example, Chelsea detectives arrested Roger Romero, who was wanted for assault with intent to murder. Romero was a victim of an assault and stabbed another youth in retaliation earlier this year police say. Chelsea authorities also arrested one gang member carrying a Chinese star, a martial arts weapon. In East Boston, authorities arrested another man carrying a manrikigusari, which is a knife with three blades.

Lynn Police arrested Rigoberto Hernandez last month for a May 18 assault involving a handgun in East Boston. According to police Hernandez is "an impact player" in MS-13. He was arraigned June 22 in East Boston District Court.

PRESS RELEASE

15 Members of the Violent Gang Ms-13 Arrested on Long Island 6 Charged with the Murders of Two Found Dead on September 21, 2004

ROSLYNN R. MAUSKOPF, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, PASQUALE J. D'AMURO, Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, JAMES H. LAWRENCE, Commissioner, Nassau County Police Department and WAYNE E. BENNETT, Superintendent, New York State Police, today announced the filing of charges against 15 leaders of La Mara Salvatrucha ("MS-13"). Five of those in custody - WILVER R. LOPEZ, also known as "Conde," EDGARDO NOEL SALINA-GALIANO, also known as "Maldito," EDWIN ENRIQUEZ, also known as "Joker," JOSE A. HERNANDEZ, also known as "Estraño," and JOSE RECINOS, also known as "Psycho" and "L'il Psycho" have been charged in the murder of two individuals whose bodies were discovered on September 21, 2004. A sixth man - JOVANIC A. BERRIOS, also known as "Sonic" and "Sony," - has been charged in connection with one of those homicides, and is still being sought by authorities. The other nine defendants have been charged for their alleged participation in a conspiracy to engage in shootings aimed at rival gang members and suspected government informants. Initial appearances and arraignments for the defendants are scheduled this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge James Orenstein at the U.S. Courthouse, Central Islip, New York.

THE MURDERS OF GENARO VENEGAS AND OLIVIA MENDOZA

According to the complaint unsealed today, on the night of September 17, 2004, 24-year-old Genaro Venegas failed to return to his residence in Suffolk County. On the morning of September 21, 2004, Venegas' body was discovered in Bethpage, New York. Venegas had been repeatedly shot in the head and torso and repeatedly stabbed. Venegas, who used the street name "El Vago", was an admitted member of the violent street gang La Mara Salvatrucha, or "MS-13."

On September 21, 2004, approximately one hour before the discovery of the body of Genaro Venegas, police found the body of 16-year-old Olivia Mendoza in Old Westbury, New York. Mendoza had been shot once in the head.

Following the two homicides, the Long Island Gang Task Force, led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and comprised of members from state and local enforcement agencies, began an intensive investigation. A series of secretly recorded conversations
Law Enforcement Response continued
revealed that both Venegas and Mendoza were murdered by members of MS-13 because they believed the two victims had provided information to law enforcement authorities.

For example, in one conversation, defendant LOPEZ was intercepted telling another MS-13 member that he and two other members named "Maldito" and "Sonic" had murdered "El Vago" Venegas. LOPEZ described shooting Venegas, stating "I put one in his chest and three in the head." LOPEZ also reported that "Maldito" and "Sonic" repeatedly stabbed Venegas. Defendant SALINA-GALIANO, known as "Maldito," was also intercepted discussing his role in the Venegas homicide. In other intercepted conversations, defendant HENRIQUEZ admitted to MS-13 members that he murdered Mendoza after receiving prior approval from defendant HERNANDEZ, alleged in the complaint to be the senior MS-13 leader in New York, as well as from defendant RECINOS.

THE CONSPIRACY TO ASSAULT
Defendants MADRID, DIAZ, IRHETA, JOAQUIN VASQUEZ, GUEVARA, ROSALES, HUMBERTO VASQUEZ, MORALES, and RUBI-GONZALEZ, have been charged with conspiracy to assault and possession of firearms in furtherance of that conspiracy for their roles in plotting to shoot rival gang members and individuals believed to be providing information to law enforcement authorities. As alleged in the complaint, senior leaders of MS-13 required each of the gang's "cliques" to maintain at least one operable firearm in order to carry out attacks, and cliques with more than one weapon were directed to distribute their excess to other cliques in need of firearms. The complaint further states that at a gang meeting on October 10, 2004 in Brooklyn, New York, defendants MADRID, DIAZ, IRHETA, JOAQUIN VASQUEZ, GUEVARA, ROSALES, HUMBERTO VASQUEZ, MORALES, and RUBI-GONZALEZ discussed plans to carry out armed attacks against members they believed had provided information to law enforcement. Eleven defendants were arrested at this gang meeting, and authorities recovered three handguns used by the defendants in connection with this conspiracy.

"The perpetrators of these brutal homicides have been swiftly identified and brought to justice," stated United States Attorney ROSLYNN R. MAUSKOPF. "We will not tolerate gang violence in our communities, and we will continue to bring to bear all our combined resources to make our streets safer." Ms. MAUSKOPF emphasized that the investigation is continuing. MS. MAUSKOPF expressed her appreciation for the work of the Long Island Gang Task Force, and noted that a total of 37 members of the MS-13 have been charged by her Office this year.

Federal Bureau of Investigation Assistant Director-in-Charge PASQUALE J. D'AMURO stated, "This investigation exemplifies our ongoing commitment to make our local communities safer by pooling resources from federal, state and local law enforcement. The combination of gangs and guns poses a grave threat to innocent lives. Residents of Long Island, like people everywhere, have a right to the pursuit of their daily lives without fearing the risk to life and limb posed by stray gunfire or deliberate assault. We are determined to guarantee that right."

JAMES H. LAWRENCE, Commissioner, Nassau County Police Department, stated, "The arrests of these individuals is indicative of the relentless effort our law enforcement community is accomplishing together to make our neighborhoods safe from these ruthless and violent gangs. The Nassau County Police Department will remain dedicated and vigilant in their participation with the FBI's Long Island Gang Task Force as we continue to work collectively on suppressing gang violence".

WAYNE E. BENNETT, Superintendent, New York State Police, stated, "Through outstanding cooperation, communication and the combined resources of federal, state and local law enforcement, these violent gang leaders have been brought to justice, sending a clear message that neither they, their gangs, nor their violent criminal activities will be tolerated in our communities."

The members of the Long Island Gang Task Force include representatives of the FBI, New York State Police, Nassau County Police Department, Hempstead Village Police Department, Freeport Police Department, and the Nassau County Department of Corrections. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Port Washington Police Department, the Suffolk County Police Department and the Suffolk County Probation Department also made valuable contributions to the success of this investigation.

If convicted, the defendants face a maximum of life imprisonment.
The government's cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Richard Donoghue, Deputy Chief of the Long Island Criminal Division of the United States Attorney's Office.
The Defendants

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<tr>
<th>WILVER R. LOPEZ</th>
<th>JOSE RECINOS</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 St. John Street</td>
<td>580 Greengrove Avenue</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Uniondale, NY</td>
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<tr>
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<td>DOB 11/2/78</td>
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<th>EDGARDO NOEL SALINA-GALIANO</th>
<th>JOVANIC A. BERRIOS</th>
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<tr>
<td>264 Lincoln Avenue</td>
<td>DOB 3/18/84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brentwood, NY</td>
<td>&quot;Sonic&quot; or &quot;Sony&quot;</td>
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<th>EDWIN HENRIQUEZ</th>
<th>REMBERTO MADRID</th>
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<td>45 Lincoln Avenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hempstead, NY</td>
<td>Brooklyn, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOB 1/27/85</td>
<td>&quot;Popeye&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Joker&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<th>ANGEL DIAZ</th>
<th>CARLOS ROSALES</th>
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<tr>
<td>16 W. Hilton Street</td>
<td>100 Jerusalem Avenue, Apt. C-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freeport, NY</td>
<td>Hempstead, NY</td>
</tr>
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<td>DOB 2/3/83</td>
<td>DOB 2/13/75</td>
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<td>&quot;Delinquenta&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Tiny&quot;</td>
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<th>HUMBERTO VASQUEZ</th>
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<tr>
<td>107-10 142 Street</td>
<td>1271 38 Street</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Brooklyn, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOB 5/26/87</td>
<td>DOB 3/8/1984</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Azule&quot; or &quot;Juan Campos&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Happy&quot;</td>
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<tr>
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<th>JOSE MORALES</th>
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<tr>
<td>36 Underhill Road</td>
<td>16 Copper Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<th>TONY GUEVARA</th>
<th>JORGE ALBERTO RUBI-GONZALES</th>
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<tr>
<td>133 Linden Avenue</td>
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<td>&quot;Fantasma&quot;</td>
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The charges announced today are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The MS-13 is a nationwide organization comprised primarily of immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, many of whom are in the United States illegally. With approximately 300 members, the MS-13 is the largest street gang on Long Island and engages in a variety of violent criminal activity, including murder, assault, rape, firearms offenses, cocaine distribution and robbery. In Nassau County, members belong to chapters, or "cliques," located primarily in Hempstead, Freeport, Roosevelt, New Cassel and Westbury. In Suffolk County, the gang's cliques are located primarily in Brentwood, Huntington, Copiague, Farmingdale and Islip.
International Mara Salvatrucha

In 1996 the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IRAIRA) was introduced in the United States. This bill allowed the "expedited removal" of immigrants who had committed crimes. These reforms have led to the Deportation of thousands of Central Americans gang members, mainly from the Los Angeles region, to their countries of origin. Upon return to El Salvador, these individuals adhered to the same gang structure that had been formed in the streets and prisons of the United States. This structure may be likened to a gang "franchise." These franchises have taken hold in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and recently Mexico.

Violent crimes in Central America have risen significantly during the 90's and early 2000's. This rise and lack of public response appears to indicate a tolerance brought about by decades of civil war and government repression. Gang members number in the tens of thousands and are teaching the youth in the various countries gang activities and tactics. This culture is spreading to the neighboring countries of Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, and the United States.

The influence of the U.S. gang culture is evident across these areas. There are local variations of dress codes: baggy clothes, baseball caps, and chains, a defined taste in music (much of it Latinos rap and hip-hop), similarities in tattoos, graffiti, hand signs and slang. Most notable is a tendency to extreme violence, which has found ready acceptance in Central American countries with violent histories.
**Mara Salvatrucha in El Salvador**

In El Salvador, Mara Salvatrucha’s 10,000 to 20,000 members are becoming well organized and increasingly involved in drug trafficking. Mara Salvatrucha gang members deported from the United States established the first cliques in El Salvador in 1992 and quickly spread throughout the country. The gang’s main rival in El Salvador is 18\textsuperscript{th} Street, also known as Calle 18 or Mara 18. Mara Salvatrucha cliques in El Salvador are territorial, controlling particular areas or neighborhoods of cities and major towns and sometimes-entire towns. The gang controls territory by "taxing" storeowners, street vendors, and drug dealers in return for "protections." Mara Salvatrucha members in El Salvador maintain close ties to Mara Salvatrucha members in the United States, particularly in California, New York, and Virginia. Some Mara Salvatrucha members guard drug shipments for Colombian and Mexican drug trafficking organizations. The shipments are transported through Central America and Mexico en route to the United States. *(Source: National Drug Intelligence Center)*

**Mara Salvatrucha in Honduras**

In Honduras, Mara Salvatruchas’s 10,000 to 15,000 members pose serious threat because members use violence to protect drug and weapons trafficking operations from rival gangs. Mara Salvatrucha cliques in Honduras were established by Salvadorian gang members who tried to enter the United States illegally but decided to relocate to Honduras and by Honduran gang members deported from the United States during the late 1990s. The gang is involved in the same criminal activities as in El Salvador. Violence committed by Mara Salvatrucha members is primarily targeted toward the 18\textsuperscript{th} Street gang, its principal rival. *(Source: National Drug Intelligence Center)*
Mara Salvatrucha in Guatemala

In Guatemala, Mara Salvatrucha, with several thousands members is responsible for numerous violent activities committed to protect territory and criminal activities from rival gangs. Mara Salvatrucha cliques in Guatemala were established by deported Salvadorean and Honduran Mara Salvatrucha members trying to migrate to the United States and by Guatemalan Mara Salvatrucha members deported from the United States during the 1990s. (Source: National Drug Intelligence Center)

Mara Salvatrucha in Mexico

Mara Salvatrucha cliques pose a significant threat to Mexico because of increasing membership and criminal activities along that country's border with the United States and Guatemala. During the late 1990s Mara Salvatrucha members began working for Mexican and Colombian drug trafficking organizations and guarded these organizations' drug shipments from Central America through Mexico to the United States. Over time, Mara Salvatrucha members established bases of operation along the U.S. Mexico border particularly in the Laredo area, and in Chiapas, Mexico, along the Mexico-Guatemala border. Gang members now transport drugs and illegal aliens on railcars from Chiapas to the U.S. border, where they are smuggled overland into the United States to Laredo, Texas. (Source: National Drug Intelligence Center)

Mara Salvatrucha in Canada

Mara Salvatrucha poses a serious and increasing threat to Canada as its membership and criminal activities continue to increase. Members primarily operate in Vancouver and Toronto and reportedly maintain close ties with members of Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) as well as Mara Salvatrucha clique in Seattle, Washington, and El Salvador. Since the late 1990s Mara Salvatrucha cliques in Canada have engaged in assault, auto theft, burglary, drug trafficking, extortion, identity theft, and weapons trafficking.
Mexico and Central America Fight Back

Since 2003, several governments in Central America began proposing new anti-gang laws. In August 2003, the Honduran Congress passed a law that makes it illegal to belong to a gang. Guidelines within the law sentence gang leaders for up to 12 years in prison and non-leaders from six to nine years. Gang members can be arrested for wearing tattoos. These new laws have drawn concerns from many human rights groups and the Catholic Church.

Despite concerns from these human rights groups, Honduran President Ricardo Maduro says that the program will continue. "My priority is the seven million Hondurans who are terrorized by these gangs." Commenting on the new authority bestowed on the local police, he said, "Most of the gang members we were capturing were going free the next day because there wasn't enough evidence to hold them. We also had a hard time getting witnesses to provide testimony because gang members were being set free the next day and looking to avenge those who accused them. So, instead of taking the long route of accumulating proof of types of crimes committed, we have opted to make it illegal to belong to gangs.

Maduro had personal experience with these gangs. In 1997, his son was kidnapped by a criminal gang and murdered. Then in 2001, using a strong stance on violent gang as his platform, Maduro ran for the presidency and was elected. Business leaders have stressed their concern about Mara Salvatrucha and other street gangs. These leaders have stated that the gangs and their crimes are creating a negative climate for possible investors in Honduras.

The new laws have had the effect of bringing some gang leaders to secret talks with government officials. The Washington Post reported that gang leaders held an extraordinary news conference, in September of 2003 in which they asked to speak with Maduro. Maduro agreed to a meeting but said, "He would not pardon any violent crimes." Five days later, in the town of Puerto Cortes, the Post reported, "the head of a young girl, hacked off with an ax, was found in burlap bag." In November 2003, gang members murdered two women in a nightclub and scrawled "Maduro we don't want dialogue" on the walls. And the body of another young girl was discovered chopped up into eight pieces and stuffed in plastic bags with a profane note to Maduro.
Critics of the new policy have fears that Maduro's strong stance will only inflame the situation.

In El Salvador, the government began an anti-gang crackdown called "Operation Strong-Arm" (Mano Dura) that has resulted in the arrest of 4,300 gang members who now face two to five year prison sentences.

According to the Honduran government, more than 500 gangs and clikas operate in the country with more than 10,000 members. The President of Honduras went on radio and TV to propose a law against the Mara Salvatrucha and other gangs. President Maduro stated that the well-known and strong presence of gangs that commit crimes against the Honduran people would no longer be tolerated. In coordination with Congress, he is proposing laws and strong sentencing guidelines for minors who have committed serious crimes, prohibiting the carrying of weapons such as the AK 47, eliminate corruption, and strengthen and reform the police forces to deal with these groups. "The Mara are criminal enterprises that harm youth and terrify our nation. Their activities are in violation of the law. Mara members commit assaults and homicides; they deal in illegal drugs and commit acts of violence and rape on their own members as a form of intimidation." In Honduras, districts have been taken over completely by the Mara Salvatrucha. "Under the new laws criminal elements will be eliminated and the town will be returning to honest citizens. The President has asked all political parties to set aside partisan politics and unite in support of this important initiative. The Honduran Congress had followed the President's advice and prohibited Mara activities in Honduras. The Congress has approved a law making it illegal to belong to one of these groups. Punishment for these gang members can range up to 12 years in jail.

In spite of an apparent increase in Mara activities in both Honduras and El Salvador, both governments claim that these programs have resulted in marked decrease in homicides.

The State of Chiapas has one of the most problem plagued state governments in Mexico. With the flow of illegal aliens from Central and South America creating immigration problems and Los Mara making the problem worse, Mexico has reinforced its border with Guatemala by realigning two military zones and placing more troops to support the interdiction of illegal alien crossings and to support their local law enforcement agencies with the growing problems that Los Mara have created.
Outlook

Mara Salvatrucha will continue to pose a serious Criminal Threat to communities throughout the United States. The gang's rapid spread and aggressive recruitment in the United States and in several drug transit and resource countries, coupled with the extreme violence demonstrated by gang members, suggest that Mara Salvatrucha will remain among the most threatening street gang in the country. Indications that previously independent cliques are forming alliances with other Mara Salvatrucha cliques, as well as with other gangs to facilitate criminal activity, further heighten the threat.
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FBI (2004 November 27) Assessing Alledge Mara Saltrucha ties to Al-Qa'ida

FBI (2004 November 5) Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) Attempts to Unite

Foreign Military Studies Office / Joint Reserve Intelligence Center Mexico & Border Security Team.
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Honduran Authorities Investigating Murdered Kingpin's Alleged Ties to Terrorists


Jackman, T (2004, August 12) The Mara Salvatrucha has 1,500 members in Fairfax alone. The Washington Post, PP. B05


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MAGLOGLLEN (2001 September) 14th annual gang information sharing conference.


NDCI (July 2004) Mara Salvatrucha update

NDIC (2002 November) Mara Salvatrucha


North Carolina Drug Threat Assessment, MS-13


Profile of Emerging Security Threat Group Gang Violence: A New Face, Mara Salvatrucha - "Forever Salvador"


Shapiro, I (2004, August 14) Gang Member Charged in Manassas Slaying. Washington Post. PP. B03

Shapiro, I (2004, September 2) Third Man Arrested in Death of Fellow Va. Gang Member. Washington Post. PP. B02


Telvock, D (2004, August 26) MS-13 Gang Member Stabbed

The Maldon Institute (2004 March 2) Mara Salvatrucha


Appendix A Tattoos
Tattoos

MS 13 members display prominent tattoos on their chest, back and arms. Most are a form of "MS" or "MS 13." They often include a clique name or telephone area code, "Salvadorians Pride," or "Mara" with a shotgun. Mickey Mouse (MM for Mexican Mafia) is also popular.
GRAFFITI AND COMMUNICATIONS

As with other gangs, MS-13 cliques use graffiti to stake their territory. They also use graffiti to communicate, along with cell phones, pagers and hand signs. It was thought that they didn't use secret codes or cipher system, but a code sheet was recently discovered in Maryland. The graffiti resembles clique tattoos and includes "MS," "MS-13," "13" or "XIII." It sometimes lists the names ranked by seniority. Members use hand signs as greetings and to challenge affiliation.
WNHID W/3rd Dn
EMM2 & Dn
Cad HVP 4L
LV 5 HVP 4L
Blood Gang
APPENDIX C Rules of the Mara Salvatrucha
On 12-08-2004 I was provided with the Rules of the Mara Salvatrucha by a Mara Salvatrucha Gang Member. He said that he was from San Pedro Honduras and was an active gang member for two years. He is 19 years old and he said that he joined the gang when he was 15 years old and defected the Gang due to him being accused of killing his own people. He further stated that he defected and moved to North Carolina where he lived hiding from the Mara Salvatrucha.

He also advised me that to identify the Maras Criminal History is due to the Size of the Tattoo and where they put it on their body. Example he stated that if we come in contact with a Mara who has a large tattoo on his face M.S. or 13. It means that he killed a Rival Gang member who had a high position with the rival gang.

If you have any further questions please contact me at the listed number.

Sgt. Dionicio Cortez
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Las reglas de las Mara Salvatrucha 13

1. No puedes decir mierda seca porque es una falta de respeto al Barrio.
2. No puedes utilizar palabras que terminen en Cho, como Ocho, Diesiocho, tienes que decir "Pullo"
3. No puedes amararte las agujetas en forma de 8, si te las miran te tumban el canton.
4. Tienes que hacer las misiones que te ponen, por que si no te matan. Eso lo hacen para demostrar que la Mara no es cosa de juego.
5. No puedes usar aretes en forma de aro, por que tu oreja y el arete forma un 8 y tu cara el uno y eso es 18.
6. Si tienes un amigo y ese amigo dice mierda y los homies lo escuchan, tu tienes que tumbarle el canton a ese vato porque si no los Homies te lo tumban a ti.
7. No te puedes salir porque si lo haces te matan, por eso tienen un dicho que dice "Entra si quieres, salte si puedes ponte trucha somos pura Mara Salvatrucha."
8. Cada dia 13 de cada mes, tiene que murir un vato de la 18.
9. Cuando el barrio dice tal Homie tiene luz verde, eso significa que van a matar a ese Homie.
10. Si te acusan de un crimien y no fuiste tu, pero sabes quien fue no puedes ponerle el dedo por que te matan.
11. Cuando el barrio hace una pegada, o sea que van a tumbar a otros barrios tienes que ir a huevo.
12. Si tienes un cuete y otro Homie te lo pide prestado o cualquier cosa tienes que darselo porque si no te tumban.
13. Tienes que estar todo el tiempo con el barrio y tienes que compartir todas tus cosas con los Homies, porque ellos son tu familia.
Rules of the Mara Salvatrucha
(Translated version of the rules received from Camaron County Texas)

1. You cannot say "Mierda Seca" (Dry Shit - a derogatory term used by rival MS members when referring to the MS) because it disrespecting the Barrio (MS).

2. You cannot use words that end in "cho" like ocho (eight), dieciocho (eighteen); you have say "pullo." (This is due to their hatred for the Eighteen Street Gang)

3. You cannot tie your shoelaces in the shape of an 8. If they are seen, you will be dropped.

4. You have to complete the missions which you are given, cause if you don't you will be killed. This is done to show that the Mara is not a game.

5. You cannot use earrings that are hoops because your ear and the earring form an eight, and your head forms the one and that is 8.

6. If you have a friend and that friend says "mierda" (shit) and the Homies hear him, you have to drop him or the Homies will drop you.

7. You cannot get out cause if you do they will kill you. That's why they have a saying that says, "If you want to, get out if you can. Be alert we are all Mara Salvatrucha."

8. Every 13th day of every month, an 18th Street member has to die.

9. When the Barrio (MS) says that a Homie has a green light that indicate that they are going to kill that Homie.

10. If they accuse you of a crime and it wasn't you but you know who it was, you can't tell cause they will kill you.

11. When the Barrio (MS) does a hit or is going to hit another Barrio, you have no choice but to go.

12. If you have a gun and another Homie asks to borrow it or something, you have to give it to him or they (MS) will drop you.

13. You have to be with the Barrio (MS) at all times and share all of your belongings with the Homies because they are your family.
APPENDIX D MS-13 Code
MS-13 Code sheet recovered from a member's apartment in Langley Park, Maryland, just outside Washington, D.C., during a search warrant.