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Transnational Gangs

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### Operation Matador nets 39 MS-13 arrests in last 30 days





NEW YORK – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York, along with ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), announced their recent launch of Operation Matador and the DHS Transnational Organized Crime Initiative (DHS TOCI), which represents a unified effort dedicated to combat the proliferation of MS-13 and other transnational criminal gang activity in the New York City metropolitan area, including Long Island.

This joint initiative is comprised of: HSI special agents, ERO deportation officers, the ICE Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and state and local law enforcement partners to include Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD), Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) and the New York City Police Department (NYPD). The DHS TOCI is responsible for identifying, interdicting and investigating a wide variety of transnational border crime with a concentration on MS-13 gang activity.

“Transnational gangs like MS-13 bring nothing but violence and conflict to our communities and their presence will not be tolerated. Their vicious criminal activities present an ongoing challenge for law enforcement everywhere,” said Angel M. Melendez, special agent in charge of HSI New York. “It is with the efforts of our federal partners under DHS and the incredible assistance provided by our local law enforcement partnerships with Suffolk County and Nassau County Police Departments that we will continue to dismantle these gangs piece by piece to enhance the safety and security of our communities.”

“These individuals are members of a violent street gang actively wreaking havoc in the community. This unified effort is about keeping New York citizens safe,” said Thomas R. Decker, field office director for ERO New York. “ERO and HSI, along with our law enforcement partners, face no limitations in the apprehension and dismantling of transnational criminal organizations. We will not rest until our communities are safer and individuals like these are brought to justice.”

A total of 45 individuals were arrested during this ongoing enforcement effort, all of which were confirmed as gang members and affiliates – including 39 affiliated with MS-13, two with the Sureños, one with the 18th Street Gang, one with the Latin Kings, one with Los Niños Malos and one with Patria.

Of the gang members arrested during this ongoing enforcement action, 20 had additional criminal histories, including prior convictions for assault and weapons charges. One has pending felony grand larceny charges and a final order of removal. Others taken into custody during the operation included:

- An El Salvadoran national arrested in Suffolk County with a criminal history of felony assault
- A Honduran national arrested in Suffolk County with a criminal history of menacing with a weapon and disorderly conduct, fighting and violent behavior
- A Mexican national arrested in Suffolk County with a felony possession of a weapon, carrying a loaded weapon and misdemeanor menacing with a weapon
- A Honduran national arrested in Nassau county with a prior conviction of criminal possession of weapon
- An El Salvadoran national arrested in Nassau County with a criminal history of felony attempted assault, disorderly conduct and misdemeanor harassment
- An El Salvadoran national arrested in Suffolk County with a prior felony conviction of criminal possession of a loaded firearm.

The arrestees, all male, included nationals from 4 countries : El Salvador (27), Honduras (11), Mexico (5), and Guatemala (2).

Suffolk County accounted for 33 arrests, the largest number of arrests during this operation to date, but DHS TOCI personnel conducted enforcement actions in multiple communities throughout Long Island and New York City.

## Area Arrest Totals

Suffolk	33
Nassau	8
Queens	3
Brooklyn	1

Individuals are confirmed as gang members if they admit membership in a gang, have been convicted of violating Title 18 USC 521 or any other federal or state law criminalizing or imposing civil consequences for gang-related activity, or if they meet certain other criteria such as having tattoos identifying a specific gang or being identified as a gang member by a reliable source.

Twelve individuals arrested during this operation crossed the border as unaccompanied minors, all of which were confirmed as MS-13 gang members. Three individuals arrested during this operation entered the United States with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJ), all of which were confirmed as MS-13 gang members. Of the 12 UACs, two had SIJ status.

Some of the individuals arrested during the enforcement action will be presented for federal prosecution for re-entry after deportation; a federal felony. Those not criminally prosecuted will be processed for removal from the country. Individuals who have outstanding orders of deportation, or who returned to the United States illegally after being deported, are subject to immediate removal from the country on federal charges. The remaining arrestees are entered into immigration proceedings and will go before an immigration judge.

The investigation was led by HSI special agents working jointly with ERO officers out of New York and was conducted under the auspices of Operation Community Shield with support from the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and Southern District of New York, OPLA, USCIS, CBP, SCPD, NCPD and NYPD.

### About Operation Community Shield

Operation Matador is the latest example of ICE's ongoing efforts, begun in 2005 under [Operation Community Shield](#), to target violent gang members and their associates, eradicate the violence they inflict upon our communities and stop the cash flow to transnational organized crime groups. Since 2005, HSI special agents working in conjunction with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies have made more than 47,000 gang-related arrests.

Operation Community Shield is a global initiative in which HSI collaborates with federal, state and local law enforcement partners to combat the growth and proliferation of transnational criminal street gangs, prison gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs in the United States and abroad. Through its domestic and international Operation Community Shield task forces, HSI leverages its worldwide presence and expansive statutory and civil enforcement authorities to mitigate the threats posted by these global networks, often through the tracing and seizing of cash, weapons and other illicit proceeds.

Partnerships with state, local, federal and international law enforcement agencies are critical to the success of HSI gang enforcement operations. Law enforcement partners provide actionable intelligence which is critical in the targeting of gangs and their membership for enforcement actions. HSI special agents use intelligence gathered from surge operations to pursue complex criminal enterprise investigations and federal prosecutions.

### MS-13

As part of Operation Community Shield, HSI has affected more than 4,300 criminal arrests and nearly 3,000 civil immigration arrests of MS-13 leaders, members and associates, including criminal arrests for Racketeering Influence Corrupt Organizations (RICO), Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering (VICAR) and gang conspiracy violations investigated by HSI New York, HSI Long Island, HSI Baltimore, HSI DC, HSI Charlotte, HSI Newark, HSI Boston, HSI San Francisco, HSI San Jose, HSI Los Angeles, HSI Detroit, HSI Nashville, HSI Houston, and our state and local law enforcement partners.

In October 2012, HSI worked with the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control to designate MS-13 as the first transnational criminal street gang as a TCO. As a result of the designation,

any property or property interests in the United States, or in the possession or control of U.S. persons in which MS-13 has an interest, are blocked.

**HSI MS-13 Gang Arrests National  
FY 2005 - FY 2017 (as of Apr. 23, 2017)**

Fiscal Year	Criminal Arrests	Administrative Arrests
2005	325	*No data collected
2006	437	*No data collected
2007	419	861
2008	689	452
2009	306	428
2010	351	291
2011	431	314
2012	156	135
2013	302	187
2014	152	64
2015	232	90
2016	363	66
2017	194	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,357</b>	<b>2,947</b>

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