



# Pierce County

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### PROSECUTOR CHARGES 19 IN GANG-RELATED HOMICIDES

Prosecutor Mark Lindquist has charged four defendants, Moises Larreinaga, Ruben Rios, Pablo Ortiz and Abel Gonzalez, as criminal conspirators in a gang-related murder that occurred on May 12. This brings to 19 the number of alleged Eastside Lokotes Surenos (ELS) gang members or associates who have been charged over the last eight months in three separate Tacoma area gang-related murders.

On Feb. 7, Camille Love was shot and killed and her brother seriously injured in a drive-by shooting on Tacoma's Eastside. Seven ELS members or associates were charged as a result. On March 25, Jose Lucas was shot and killed during an apparent robbery attempt in Tacoma's South End. Five ELS gang members or associates were charged with that crime. On May 12, Juan Zuniga was shot and killed in his West Tacoma home. Nine ELS gang members have been charged in the murder.

"Earlier this year, we charged 36 members or associates of the Hilltop Crips street gang with a variety of crimes, including Attempted Murder and Conspiracy," Prosecutor Mark Lindquist said. "I said at the time that we were going to aggressively prosecute violent street gangs. These charges against ELS gang members are another significant step in our ongoing effort to reduce gang violence in our community."

Defendants Larreinaga, Rios, Ortiz and Gonzalez are alleged to be ELS criminal street gang members. All are charged with conspiring with other charged ELS members to kill Zuniga, who was the reputed ELS leader. These four co-conspirators were in prison at the time of the murder.

"We have charged four gang members with conspiring to commit murder from their prison cells," Prosecutor Lindquist said. "This is another example of our Gang Unit prosecutors using bold methods to hold criminals accountable."

Arraignment for Moises Larreinaga is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 13 in the County-City building at 1:30 p.m. The three remaining defendants will be arraigned when they arrive from the Department of Corrections. A press conference will be held this afternoon, Dec. 13, at 2:00 p.m. at the Prosecutor's Office, Room 946, in the County-City Building, 930 Tacoma Ave. S.

The Tacoma Police Department, the Department of Corrections, the US Marshal's Service and the Prosecutor's Office worked together on this large scale effort.

"I commend the Tacoma Police Department for their thorough and intelligent investigation of these crimes," Prosecutor Lindquist said. "Their diligence and commitment made these cases, just as their hard work made the Hilltop Crip cases."

Of the 36 members or associates of the Hilltop Crips who were charged, 32 have either been convicted at trial or pleaded guilty. Two trials for the remaining defendants are set later this month.



Criminal charges are only allegations. A person is presumed innocent unless and until he or she is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

### **ABOUT THE PIERCE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S GANG UNIT**

Prosecutor Lindquist formed the Gang Unit in the Prosecutor's Office in 2009 to focus resources and develop expertise in gang prosecutions. Assistant Chief Criminal Deputy Phil Sorensen supervises the Gang Unit. Deputy Prosecutor Greg Greer, who has successfully prosecuted dozens of gang members and associates, is the lead trial attorney. Deputy Prosecutors Jared Ausserer and Jason Ruyf and two legal assistants also serve on the team along with a victim advocate.

"Our Gang Unit is committed to aggressive and innovative prosecution," Prosecutor Lindquist said. "We are working closely with our partners in law enforcement and neighborhood groups toward our ultimate goal of making our neighborhoods safer."

The Prosecutor's Office Gang Unit is partly funded through a federal grant administered by Safe Streets.

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