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**MS-13 GANG MEMBER SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 19 YEARS FOR  
RACKETEERING CONSPIRACY**

*Participated in the Gang Rapes of Two High School Girls*

**Greenbelt**, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Deborah K. Chasanow sentenced Carlos Vasquez Martinez, age 24, of Hyattsville, today to 235 months in prison followed by five years of supervised release for conspiracy to conduct and participate in racketeering enterprise activities of MS-13, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. As a special condition of his supervised release, Judge Chasanow ordered that Martinez may not have contact with the victims in this case or with any MS-13 members.

U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, "We will continue to coordinate our efforts and use all available tools to combat violent gangs that engage in such vicious and heartless crimes."

"We are pleased to have taken such a violent offender off the streets," says ATF Special Agent in Charge Gregory K. Gant, "so that he no longer can prey on our children and commit such horrific acts."

According to the plea agreement, La Mara Salvatrucha, also known as MS-13, is a gang composed primarily of immigrants or descendants of immigrants from El Salvador, with members operating throughout Prince George's County and Montgomery County, Maryland and elsewhere. MS-13 is a national and international criminal organization with approximately 10,000 members.

MS-13 is organized in "cliques," including the Sailors Locos Salvatruchos Westside ("SLSW"), the Teclas Locos Salvatruchos and the Langley Park Salvatruchos. From 2002 through March 2007, Martinez was associated with the SLSW clique, paying dues and attending MS-13 meetings, including traveling to Virginia for a meeting of MS-13 members from the Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Virginia areas on January 23, 2003.

Martinez participated in the gang rape of two girls on May 12, 2003. The crime, known to MS-13 gang members as a "train," consisted of luring female victims to an MS-13 skipping party where gang members lined up and raped each girl. MS-13 gang members picked up two girls outside a high school during the early morning hours of the school day. The MS-13 members and the two girls went to Martinez' home, where he and a number of other MS-13 members were present. The girls were taken to separate bedrooms in the residence and were told that they would have intercourse with all the MS-13 members in attendance. Martinez and Henry Zelaya held the

first victim down and choked her and Oscar Ramos Velasquez, a/k/a “Casper” brandished a gun. The victims estimated that more than 10 gang members came into the room in five minute intervals and raped them. After the rape, Martinez drove with several MS-13 members to Los Angeles, California, to avoid possible arrest for the rape.

On October 21, 2003, Martinez, along with other MS-13 members participated in an assault on a 17-year-old young man walking home from school. The victim was punched and struck with a wooden bat.

In July 2005, Martinez was present at meetings in which gang members discussed plans to purchase firearms to use against a police officer. Ultimately, no attempt was made on the police officer’s life. On August 6, 2005, Martinez participated in a meeting of MS-13 members in Prince George’s County, Maryland, in which Martinez discussed the purchase of firearms for MS-13 members.

On August 3, 2006, Martinez volunteered to talk with law enforcement officials at the United States Attorney’s Office in Greenbelt, Maryland. Martinez was advised of his Miranda rights and was told that making false statements to federal agents was a crime. Despite these warnings, Martinez provided several different accounts of his activities on the day the two young women were raped at his apartment. Martinez initially denied living at the residence where the rapes took place, but eventually admitted that it was his home at the time and falsely denied being present for the rapes or having knowledge of the rapes until he had a conversation with Velasquez the next morning.

Oscar Ramos Velasquez, age 22, of Baltimore, was sentenced to 37 years in prison for conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering, conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise and conspiracy to commit assaults with a deadly weapon in order to maintain and increase his position in MS-13, assault with a deadly weapon in aid of racketeering and use of a firearm in relation to a crime of violence. Henry Zelaya, age 21, was sentenced to life in prison for conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise involving murder, robbery, obstruction of justice and witness tampering. Both were convicted by federal juries after lengthy trials.

To date, this office has charged 49 gang members with federal offenses, with 30 defendants charged in this RICO conspiracy case. Twenty-two MS-13 gang members have been convicted thus far of RICO conspiracy charges.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the RAGE Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Prince George’s County Police Department; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Montgomery County Department of Police; the Howard County Police Department; the Maryland National Capital Park Police; and the Maryland State Police.

Mr. Rosenstein thanked the Prince George’s County State’s Attorney Glenn F. Ivey and Montgomery County State’s Attorney John McCarthy for the assistance that they and their offices provided.

Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys James Trusty and Chan Park, who prosecuted the case.