



INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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LATINO GANG MEMBERS INDICTED IN RACIAL ATTACKS



2009 Fall Issue
August 30, 2009

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Nearly 150 Latino Gang Members Indicted For Racist Violence

gangs



California law officials display weapons seized in the May arrests.

A Latino street gang in a small city in Los Angeles County waged a campaign of racist violence and intimidation that was designed to drive out the city's African-American residents, according to recently unsealed federal indictments of 147 members and associates of the [Varrio Hawaiian](#)

Gardens.

Varrío Hawaiian Gardens "gang members take pride in their racism and often refer to the VHG Gang as the 'Hate Gang,'" the indictment that was unsealed in May states. "VHG gang members have expressed a desire to rid the city of Hawaiian Gardens of all African-Americans and have engaged in a systematic effort to achieve that result by perpetrating crimes against African-Americans."

The reputed VHG members are charged with 476 "overt acts" of racketeering, such as murder, attempted murder, weapons trafficking and kidnapping. Among the criminal acts detailed in the indictment is one instance where gang members fired bullets into a home occupied by eight people. It's not clear from the indictment whether anyone was hit.

Additionally, gang members chased a black man while yelling racial epithets and then struck him repeatedly with a garden rake, the indictment alleges. Days later, VHG members allegedly stabbed the same victim several times. He survived.

Sixty-three of the indicted gang members were arrested May 22 in early morning raids. According to U.S. Attorney Thomas O'Brien, the investigation of the Varrío Hawaiian Gardens gang began in 2005, after a Los Angeles sheriff's deputy was shot to death while searching for a VHG member charged with shooting an African-American man.

Latinos vastly outnumber African Americans in Hawaiian Gardens. The 2000 census, the most recent data available, shows that while Latinos make up 73% of the city's 15,000 inhabitants, only 4% are African Americans.

The VHG arrests resulted from the latest in a string of criminal investigations that have found Latino street gangs in Southern California are carrying out organized racist violent targeting African Americans in majority Latino areas.

In late 2006, the *Intelligence Report* revealed that leaders of the Mexican Mafia prison gang were directing Latino street gangs outside prison walls to carry out ethnic cleansing attacks on African Americans in order to establish purely Latino neighborhoods.

Since then, federal prosecutors have charged members of a Latino street gang in Florence-Firestone, an unincorporated district near the Watts neighborhood in Los Angeles, with conducting a violent campaign targeting African Americans that allegedly resulted in 20 homicides.

Also, four members of The Avenues, a Latino street gang based in Highland Park, a neighborhood located just northeast of downtown Los Angeles, were convicted in 2007 of hate crime murder. They killed a black man as part of an ongoing effort to rid Highland Park of African Americans.

Federal, state and local authorities launched a widespread crackdown on Latino gangs in the Los Angeles metropolitan area after Latino gang members looking for any black person to kill in the Harbor Gateway district of Los Angeles gunned down Cheryl Green, a 14-year-old African-American girl whose murder became a rallying point.

"We have evidence linking inmates who are known as 'shot callers' directly to street shootings based entirely on race," Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca stated after Green's murder. "The shot caller will often order the gunman to find someone — anyone — who is black or brown and shoot them. ... Gang affiliation does not matter. Only the color of the victim's skin matters."

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