



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

1/8/18

**VISALIA GANG MEMBER SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR MURDER**

On Friday, January 05, 2018, in Department 6 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Gary Paden sentenced Samuel Molina, age 27, to an indeterminate term of life in prison for murder. On August 30, 2017, a Tulare County jury found Molina guilty of one count of second-degree murder with the special allegation that the crime was committed for the benefit of or in association with a criminal street gang. Molina has a prior weapons possession felony from 2009.

In the early morning hours of November 15, 2014, Molina and another man, Franky Luna, age 22, went to the apartment of a romantic acquaintance of Molina's. When Molina knocked on the door, the victim, who was father to acquaintance's three children, answered. After an argument ensued between the victim and Molina, the victim was stabbed seven times. The victim's 7-year-old child witnessed the crime. The victim implicated Molina in the crime before being transported to the hospital where he died. Molina and Luna fled the scene but were arrested separately a few days later. Luna pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and was sentenced to 11 years in prison on March 18, 2016.

In California, a second-degree murder conviction carries a life sentence with a parole eligibility date set by statute at 15 years.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Sean Sangree and investigated by Detective Mona Whaley of the Visalia Police Department.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare  
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