



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

3/28/18

GANG LEADER INDICTED, ARRAIGNED ON MULTIPLE MURDERS

On Monday, March 26, 2018, in Department 10 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Pedro Sanchez, age 34, of Lindsay, was arraigned on a grand jury indictment on sixteen felony counts including murder. The grand jury handed down its indictment on March 12, 2018.

Sanchez is charged with five counts of first-degree murder with the special allegation that the murders were committed for the benefit of a criminal street gang. On four of the murder charges, Sanchez is charged with the special allegation that a firearm was used causing death. Sanchez is charged with the murder of Tonya Huff on July 19, 2014, in Porterville, the murder of Noe Martinez on January 19, 2015, outside of Porterville, the murder of Matthew Villegas on February 12, 2015, outside of Visalia, the murder of Manuel Gonzalez on March 5, 2015, in Visalia, and the murder of Alfonso Pena on May 12, 2015, outside of Porterville.

Sanchez was also charged with one count of arson, one count of conspiracy to commit robbery, four counts of conspiracy to commit murder, and five counts of gang conspiracy to commit murder. Sanchez was given no bail.

Sanchez was apprehended as part of 2015's Operation Red Sol, a multi-agency gang sweep which became the largest criminal case in Tulare County history. Originally charged with 47 counts including conspiracy, gang crimes, and attempted murder, Sanchez and eleven other gang members were indicted by a criminal grand jury in December of 2016 with 65 counts, including murder. In that indictment, Sanchez was charged with the murder of Rigoberto Santa Maria on September 17, 2015, eight counts of conspiracy to commit murder, and other gang related crimes. Sanchez was awaiting trial for this case when the new indictment was handed down.

"Law enforcement and prosecutors have done a commendable job on this case and have never let up on their pursuit of justice for the families of the victims and for the safety of our communities against gang violence," said District Attorney Tim Ward.

The Office of the District Attorney previously announced that it is seeking the death penalty against Sanchez for the 2016 grand jury indictment.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare
Assistant District Attorney Dave Alavezos (559) 636-5494*