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**Robert Hur**

*Statement on MS-13 Prosecution Measures*

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[AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio]

Good afternoon. My name is Robert Hur. About five weeks ago, I was sworn in as the Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice. In that role, I serve as the principal advisor to the Deputy Attorney General. I appreciate the chance to talk to you about the Justice Department's aggressive efforts to achieve this Administration's goal of dismantling the translational gang, *la Mara Salvatrucha*, also known as MS-13.

As you all know, the President is traveling to Long Island tomorrow to talk about our fight to eradicate the violent threat of MS-13. And as we speak, the Attorney General is in El Salvador, where he will spend the next two days addressing the root of this problem, the San Salvadorian prisons that house the leaders of this dangerous gang.

While there, the Attorney General will meet with members of the Justice Department's transnational anti-gang taskforce on the ground in El Salvador, and the attorneys general from the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to discuss joint efforts to -- to disrupt and take down MS-13.



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Earlier in my career, I served as a federal prosecutor in Maryland, where I personally prosecuted a number of MS-13 racketeering cases. These included capital cases in which the defendants' crimes were so violent and so heinous that the government saw fit to pursue the death penalty.

Through these prosecutions I learned firsthand from the victims, their grieving and heartbroken families, and other members of terrorized communities just what a scourge this group of thugs really is.

This gang's chilling motto is: "Mata, viola, controla" -- which means "kill, rape, and control." They seek to live up to this motto through truly shocking acts of violence designed to instill fear: vicious machete attacks, execution-style gunshots, gang-rape, and human trafficking. They use whatever they can get their hands on -- guns, knives, machetes, baseball bats, tire irons, or their fists and feet. Not just to inflict violence -- they use violence to shock, to send a message, and to control territory here in the U.S. and in Central America.

The Attorney General has answered the President's call. And we at the Justice Department are moving forward aggressively against MS-13. Specifically, pursuant to the President's direction and executive orders, the Attorney General has directed the department's law enforcement agencies -- ATF, DEA, FBI, and the Marshals Service, as well as federal prosecutors across the country -- to prioritize the prosecution of gang members, specifically MS-13.

The Attorney General has issued charging guidance regarding violent crime and criminal immigration enforcement, both of which directly target MS-13 members and their associates. In addition, the Department of Justice has requested funding for 300 more federal prosecutors to focus specifically on violent crime and criminal immigration enforcement.

We've also prioritize multi-agency and cross-border collaboration in order to attack MS-13 from all angles. The Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security are coordinating our anti-gang efforts to ensure that we bring both criminal and immigration laws to bear in the fight against transnational gangs.



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We continue our critical partnerships with state and local law enforcement around the country whose brave men and women are truly on the front lines in the fight against MS-13. And we work, of course, hand in glove with our law enforcement partners in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. They are helping us take the fight to MS-13 on its home turf. It speaks volumes that the Attorney General himself has traveled to the nerve center of MS-13 and is standing in solidarity with our partners in Central America.

Indeed, earlier today, just hours ago, El Salvadorian prosecutors announced that they have filed charges against, and arrested, over the past 36 hours, hundreds of members of MS-13 in El Salvador. Many of the defendants are members of MS-13 *Peajes Locos Salvatruchos* clique who are centered in the La Paz department of El Salvador.

Earlier this year, members of this MS-13 clique committed several high-profile murders in El Salvador. The shooter in these murders fled to the United States and is now in ICE custody pending immigration proceedings. This prosecution showcases just how closely we -- we are working with our partners in El Salvador to combat MS-13. Specifically, U.S. law enforcement agents with ICE, who are on the ground in El Salvador, are coordinating with their counterparts here in the U.S. to ensure that the shooter is removed from the United States as quickly as possible to face charges in El Salvador.

This investigation is being handled by Salvadorian gang prosecutors who are trained and mentored by embedded DOJ prosecutors in El Salvador and Salvadorian police officers who are trained and mentored by the FBI and advisors from the State Department.

At the request of Salvadorian prosecutors, the Justice Department has also arranged to have an essential witness to the murders transported to El Salvador for court proceedings.

The United States law enforcement and federal prosecutors recently targeted leaders and members of the same *Peajes* clique operating here in Maryland, charging 16 defendants with racketeering offenses involving murder and attempted murder, the last of whom was sentenced this year to life imprisonment. These are very significant blows to MS-13 and are made possible by our close cross-border coordination.



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We've also revitalized the Institutional Hearing Program, which brings immigration judges to Bureau Prisons facilities to adjudicate the immigration status of federal criminal alien inmates while they're incarcerated. This results in much quicker deportation after these criminals serve out their prison sentences here in the United States.

Finally, we are also holding sanctuary cities accountable for their lawless conduct. The Attorney General will not allow sanctuary cities to become sanctuaries for criminals. Earlier this week, the Attorney General announced new grant conditions. Cities and states may only receive earned JAG grants if they comply with federal law, allow federal immigration officials access to detention facilities, and provide 48 hours' notice before they release an illegal alien wanted by federal authorities.

Taking on MS-13 is a top priority of this Administration and this Justice Department. We will not tire and we will not fail.

I am humbled to once again be in a position to work to reduce and ultimately decimate this gang to make our communities safe for all Americans.

Thank you.