



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

11/16/20

**PORTERVILLE GANG MEMBER SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON  
FOR OPERATION RED SOL CONSPIRACY**

On November 4, 2020, the Tulare County Superior Court sentenced Robert Duran, age 39, to 56 years-to-life in prison for conspiracy to commit murder. On December 18, 2018, a jury convicted Duran of conspiracy to commit murder with the special allegation that the crime was for the benefit of a criminal street gang and that one of the conspirators was armed with a gun. Duran possess a prior 2002 strike for gun possession with a gang special allegation.

In August and September of 2015, local law enforcement and the California Department of Justice conducted a large scale wiretap operation targeting the Tulare County Norteno criminal street gang named Operation Red Sol. On October 1, 2005, 52 violent gang members were arrested in the operation. Eighty-two defendants in total were charged with 151 crimes including murder, conspiracy to commit murder, robbery, weapons, and drugs. At over 400 pages, it remains the largest criminal case filed in Tulare County history.

On August 29, 2015, Duran, a member of the Norteno street gang in Porterville, received orders from superior gang members to “take care of” rival gang members. On September 3, 2015, law enforcement intercepted gang members, one of whom was armed with a gun, in a stolen car on their way to the target house in Lindsay. Another gang member, Marcos Nevarez, conducted surveillance of the target. Duran was coordinating the operation by phone. Law enforcement arrested both Duran and Nevarez during the gang sweep in October 2015. In 2018, Nevarez was found guilty of gang conspiracy, street terrorism, and other gang related crimes. He was sentenced to 25 years-to-life in prison in 2019.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Benjamin Taksa and was primarily investigated by the Tulare County Sheriff’s Office and the California Department of Justice with assistance from numerous Tulare County law enforcement agencies.

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