



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 27, 2025

Feds Bag Top MS-13 Gang Leader in Virginia. Noem Warns Criminal Illegals: Get Out

Federal agents collared a top leader of the Salvadoran MS-13 gang today.

Henry Josue Villatoro Santos became the second high-level gang member arrested in the last month, and once deported, he might well land in El Salvador's brutal CECOT prison that holds thousands of the gang's members.

MS-13 is one of the gangs that President Trump declared a terrorist organization on Day 1 of his administration. The State Department formalized that designation when it published a list of such gangs, and U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi laid out the legal strategy and tactics on prosecuting them.



AP Images
Kristi Noem at CECOT prison

Just captured a major leader of MS13. Tom HOMAN is a superstar!

Donald Trump Truth Social 3/27/25 07:43 AM

— Donald J. Trump Posts From His Truth Social (@TrumpDailyPosts) [March 27, 2025](#)

The Suspect

Agents arrested Santos, a 24-year-old illegal alien, in Woodbridge, Virginia, about 23 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., [Fox News reported](#):

Attorney General Pam Bondi and FBI Director Kash Patel watched the arrest unfold from a nearby tactical operations center. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche and senior DOJ official Emil Bove were also present.

“They executed a clean, safe operation and the bad guys in custody. And thanks to the FBI, we got one of the worst of the worst of the MS-13 off the streets this morning. Virginia and the country is a lot safer today,” Bondi told Fox News following the arrest.

Bondi told reporters that Santos was one of the top three MS-13 leaders in the country.

Pam Bondi, Attorney General: “Early this morning, one of the top leaders of MS-13 was apprehended. He was the leader for the East Coast, one of the top three in the entire country, right here in Virginia...He is an illegal alien from El Salvador—and he will NOT be living in our... pic.twitter.com/38iBwYEzBU



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[USA Today reported](#) that he faces a felony gun possession charge:

When agents searched his room, they said they found a 9mm handgun near the bed. Agents also allegedly found three additional firearms, ammunition and two suppressors.

Agents also found “indicia of MS-13 association” in his garage bedroom, according to the [criminal] affidavit.

“America is safer today because one of the top domestic terrorists in MS-13, he is off the streets,” Bondi told reporters. “This has been an ongoing directive of President Trump. His directive to me when I became Attorney General of the United States was very simple: Keep America safe!”

Pam Bondi, Attorney General: “America is safer today because one of the top domestic terrorists in MS-13, he is off the streets. This has been an ongoing directive of President Trump. His directive to me when I became Attorney General of the United States was very simple: Keep... pic.twitter.com/vJtIReeM5q

— Donald J. Trump Posts From His Truth Social (@TrumpDailyPosts) [March 27, 2025](#)

Kash Patel, FBI Director: “This task force is going to go everywhere as needed, across the United States to bring the form of justice and measured security and safety that our American citizens deserve...If you are going to continue to commit acts of violent crime, you will meet... pic.twitter.com/w08REN4Ijz

— Donald J. Trump Posts From His Truth Social (@TrumpDailyPosts) [March 27, 2025](#)

Said FBI chieftain Kash Patel, “If you are going to continue to commit acts of violent crime, you will meet the same fate that this individual did this morning.”

On Truth Social, President Donald Trump called the Santos arrest a “big deal.”

Great job by Pam Bondi, [@FBI Director Kash](#), Tom HOMAN, and Kristi N, on the capture of MS13 leader - A big deal!

Donald Trump Truth Social 3/27/25 08:28 AM

— Donald J. Trump Posts From His Truth Social (@TrumpDailyPosts) [March 27, 2025](#)

On February 27 in Hyattsville, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C., federal agents bagged Salvadoran David Alejandro Orellana-Aleman, an illegal alien who faces terrorism and other charges in his home country.

The arrest was “a significant blow to the leadership and organization of the MS-13 terrorist organization” because he is “a high-ranking leader in the MS-13 transnational terrorist organization and controlled the operation of MS-13 cliques in the United States, Mexico, and Europe,” an [ICE official said](#).



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Though Salvadoran authorities arrested him eight years ago and charged with extortion, possessing a firearm, and terror affiliation because of his MS-13 membership, he somehow entered the United States illegally. Prince George's County cops arrested him on December 9.

Noem Tours CECOT

Both men may well land in Salvador's [CECOT](#) — *Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo*, or Terrorism Confinement Center — a prison constructed solely to house the likes of Santos and Orellana-Aleman.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem toured the facility this week, she announced on X.

"President Trump and I have a clear message to criminal illegal aliens: LEAVE NOW," she wrote:

If you do not leave, we will hunt you down, arrest you, and you could end up in this El Salvadorian prison.

I toured the CECOT, El Salvador's Terrorism Confinement Center.

President Trump and I have a clear message to criminal illegal aliens: LEAVE NOW.

If you do not leave, we will hunt you down, arrest you, and you could end up in this El Salvadorian prison. pic.twitter.com/OItDqNsFxM

— Secretary Kristi Noem (@Sec_Noem) [March 26, 2025](#)

In early February, [El Salvador agreed](#) to accept Tren de Aragua gang members, and on March 15, [Trump invoked](#) the Alien Enemies Act [to deport](#) them summarily. [That law](#), passed in 1798 and signed by President John Adams, gives the president plenary power over enemy aliens:

Whenever there is a declared war between the United States and any foreign nation or government, or any invasion or predatory incursion is perpetrated, attempted, or threatened against the territory of the United States by any foreign nation or government, and the President makes public proclamation of the event, all natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of the hostile nation or government, being of the age of fourteen years and upward, who shall be within the United States and not actually naturalized, shall be liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed as alien enemies.

Far-left Judge [James Boasberg](#) of the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., appointed by former President Barack Hussein Obama, blocked the deportations and usurped the president's plenary power to control immigration. In a separate opinion, [he refused](#) to lift his order.

[He faces impeachment](#) in the U.S. House of Representatives for his deranged, pro-terrorism jurisprudence.

Terror Declaration

After [Trump declared](#) that the gang was a terrorist outfit, the [State Department published](#) a full list of cartels and/or transnational criminal organizations so designated:

[Tren de Aragua](#) (TdA);



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[Mara Salvatrucha](#) (MS-13);

[Cartel de Sinaloa](#) (the Sinaloa Cartel);

[Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion](#) (Jalisco New Generation Cartel);

[Carteles Unidos](#);

[Cartel del Noreste](#);

[Cartel del Golfo](#); and

[La Nueva Familia Michoacana](#).

□ The U.S. has officially declared the following as Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Tren de Aragua, MS-13, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, the United Cartels, the Gulf Cartel, the Northeast Cartel, and the Michoacán Family.

pic.twitter.com/cgcw9juyE1

— Rapid Response 47 (@RapidResponse47) [February 19, 2025](#)

Meanwhile, Bondi hatched her prosecutorial plans, which include indictments for capital crimes, both as terrorists and racketeers and as foreign narcotics kingpins who run continuing criminal enterprises and violate machine-gun laws.

The factors involved in charging the gang members will include their roles as members or leaders in the gang, whether they have killed or injured Americans, whether they are involved in international terrorism, and what violent crimes they have committed.

As well, DOJ will use “standardized language” in search warrants and indictments for members of TdA, MS-13, the Sinaloa Cartel, and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel.



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