



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



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Gang Member Sentenced for Drug Conspiracy Orchestrated from Prison

VENTURA, Calif. – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Omar Hernandez Ruiz (DOB 07/27/87), of Santa Paula, was sentenced on September 17, 2025, to 35 years to life in state prison pursuant to California's three strikes law. Ruiz previously pled guilty on August 18, 2025, to one felony count of conspiracy to transport or sell methamphetamine. He also admitted all special allegations and aggravating factors, including strike priors and committing the crime for the benefit of, at the direction of, and in association with a criminal street gang.

Ruiz, a prison gang member, was incarcerated at the California State Prison, Centinela at the time of these crimes. He is already serving 156 years to life in prison for a 2013 Santa Paula murder and assault on a peace officer.

From September 2024 through November 2024, Ruiz coordinated from prison the transportation of high quantities of drugs utilizing several co-conspirators. On November 14, 2024, one of Ruiz's drug runners was arrested with over nine pounds of methamphetamine. When the drug runner was pulled over by Ventura County Sheriff's deputies for speeding, she was on the phone with Ruiz.

Ruiz was transported from Centinela State Prison to Ventura County Jail on August 11 to face these new charges.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Stephanie Leija, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Major Crimes Gang Unit, prosecuted the case.

"The complex criminal enterprise that Ruiz was running from prison underscores the threat to public safety he presents even while incarcerated," Ms. Leija said. "When he returns to state prison, we hope this sentence puts an end to his ability to orchestrate criminal activity from behind bars."

Case: 2025017850

Defendant Information:

Omar Hernandez Ruiz (DOB 07/27/87)

Santa Paula, CA

Charges pled guilty to:

- PC 182(a)(1) – Conspiracy to Commit a Crime

Special allegations admitted:

- PC 186.22(b)(1) – Street terrorism
- PC 667S3 – Strike 3
- PC 1170(h)(3) – Prior serious or violent felony
- PC 667(a)(1) – Serious felony prior
- CRC 4.421(a)(8) – The manner in which the crime was carried out indicates planning, sophistication, or professionalism
- CRC 4.421(a)(10) – The crime involved a large quantity of contraband
- CRC 4.421(b)(2) – The defendant's prior convictions are numerous or of increasing seriousness
- CRC 4.421(b)(3) – The defendant has served a prior term in prison

