

Commonwealth's Attorney  
Colin D. Stolle

Chief Deputies  
Susan G. Hooks  
Scott M. Lang

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY  
CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

Deputies  
Wendy Alexander  
Tabitha B. Anderson  
Sara R. Chandler  
Patrick J. Connolly  
Janee D. Joslin  
David W. Laird  
Paul J. Powers

2425 Nimmo Parkway  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456-9050

(757) 385-4401  
FAX (757) 385-1288  
TDD: 711  
[www.vbgov.com/oca](http://www.vbgov.com/oca)

**NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Macie Allen (757) 385-8545  
[mpallen@vbgov.com](mailto:mpallen@vbgov.com)

**Commonwealth v. Melvin Edgardo Molina-Ramos**

**MS-13 Member Sentenced to Serve 50 Years for Ordering the Murder of Young Man**

Virginia Beach, Va. – Colin D. Stolle, Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Virginia Beach, announced today that Melvin Edgardo Molina-Ramos, age 25, was sentenced on charges of Solicitation to Commit Murder, Conspiracy to Commit Murder, Participate in Criminal Act for Benefit of Gang, Accessory After the Fact to Homicide. He was found guilty of these charges on November 15, 2021, after a three-day jury trial. Circuit Court Judge James C. Lewis, who presided over the trial, sentenced Molina-Ramos to sixty-five (65) years in prison with fifteen (15) years suspended, leaving fifty (50) years to serve.

The Commonwealth's evidence proved that on July 6, 2018, two men were kayaking on Lake Smith around 10 a.m. when they observed an unresponsive male slumped over in a wooded area of the shoreline. They called police, who arrived on scene along with the medical examiner and determined the male to be deceased with a gunshot wound to the back of the head. There was no weapon found at the scene and the victim did not have identification. He was later identified as Jairo Guardado.

An extensive investigation including video surveillance, cell phone data, and witness interviews ultimately indicated that the murder was related to MS-13 gang activity. MS-13 is a transnational criminal street gang with international membership. Melvin Edgardo Molina-Ramos and four (4) fellow MS-13 gang members were involved in the murder of Guardado because they believed he was involved with a rival gang. Molina-Ramos, the most senior member of MS-13 out of the five (5) co-defendants, ordered Guardado's murder. As a part of their MS-13 gang membership, the three (3) co-defendants at the scene of the homicide killed Guardado and were threatened with death by Molina-Ramos if they failed or if they spoke of the homicide. Molina-Ramos solicited

and conspired in the murder and provided assistance to the three (3) co-defendants after the murder was completed. Three co-defendants have trials pending in Virginia Beach Circuit Court.

The Virginia Beach Police Department Homicide Unit, Norfolk Police Department Detective Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation Tidewater Violent Crimes Task Force, Federal Bureau of Investigation Norfolk Field Office, and Fairfax County Police Department Gang Investigations Unit assisted with the investigation and prosecution of this case.

Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Tabitha B. Anderson prosecuted this case. Please contact Macie Allen if additional information is desired.

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