

Police charge trio in drive-by

By Mark PavilonsEditor

Three Toronto men have been charged with numerous offences in the drive-by shooting in Lloydtown earlier this year. The investigation revealed an organized crime connection. The incident has left the 65-year-old local senior with life-altering injuries. Investigators with the York Regional Police Serious and Organized Crime Bureau made the arrests last week, along with a few others, in an indepth investigation. On Sunday, Feb. 12, at approximately 8:40 a.m., police responded to reports of a shooting on Centre Street, between Rebellion Way and Church Street in Lloydtown. The victim had been walking his dog on a quiet residential street when a car passed him at a high rate of speed. Multiple gunshots were fired from the vehicle and the man was struck several times. The suspects then fled west on Centre Street. Responding officers located the victim, who was taken to hospital with serious gunshot injuries. The victim is going through a lengthy recovery process. Investigators learned that the suspects, believed to be members of the Mara Salvatrucha street gang, commonly known as MS-13, were hired by an organized crime group to kill a man. The suspects targeted the wrong person and shot the victim instead. The investigation became known as 'Project Rebellion.' Between May 18 and June 1, police executed warrants at various locations in Toronto. As a result, eight people were charged, three of them with Conspiracy to Commit Murder and Attempted Murder, along with weapons and drug charges and five of them for a variety of criminal offences. Carlos Gutierrez, 27, is charged with Conspiracy to Commit Murder, Attempt Murder, Participate in Activities of a Criminal Organization, Possess Substance for Trafficking, Possession of a Loaded Prohibited Firearm, Possession of a Prohibited Firearm with Ammunition, Possession of a Prohibited Device Knowing its Possession is Unauthorized, Possess Substance for Trafficking. Kenny Banchon Urbina, 30, is charged with Possession of a Prohibited Firearm with Ammunition, Conspiracy to Commit Murder, Attempt Murder, Participate in Activities of a Criminal Organization. Carlos Pena Torrez, 34, is charged with Conspiracy to Commit Murder, Attempt Murder, Participate in Activities of a Criminal Organization, Discharging Firearm with Intent, Conspiracy to Commit an Indictable Offence. During the investigation, officers seized a handgun and an AK-47 assault rifle with ammunition and a drum magazine. Quantities of cocaine and fentanyl were also seized. Investigators believe there are people with information about the accused parties and this crime. They urge anyone with information who has not yet spoken with investigators to contact police as soon as possible. Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the York Regional Police Serious and Organized Crime Bureau at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 6970. Alternatively, information may also be provided anonymously by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS or going online at www.1800222tips.com.