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Attorney General Mayes Secures 12.5-Year Sentence for Gang Member Who Defrauded Victims from Prison

Attorney General Mayes Secures 12.5-Year Sentence for Gang Member Who Defrauded Victims from Prison

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

PHOENIX – Attorney General Kris Mayes today announced that Robert Lopez, a member of the Arizona Mexican Mafia, was sentenced on October 8, 2026, to 12.5 years in the Arizona Department of Corrections, followed by five years of supervised probation with gang terms. Lopez was also ordered to pay more than $250,000 in restitution after pleading guilty to conspiracy and fraud charges for running a scheme from behind prison walls that victimized members of the community.

“Robert Lopez used contraband phones to defraud people out of their savings and fund a violent prison gang. This sentence holds him accountable,” said Attorney General Mayes. “I am grateful to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry Office of the Inspector General and the Department of Public Safety for their work, and to our prosecutors for securing this sentence.”

Lopez, other inmates and their civilian associates used contraband cell phones to contact victims, posing as a government debt-relief program called Debt2Credit Associates LLC. Victims were convinced to buy gold coins, often with their own credit cards, and send them to co-conspirators. The group paid off small amounts of victims’ debt to gain trust, then persuaded them to “invest” much more and left their debts unpaid. Coin and pawn shops that unknowingly bought the coins were also victimized.

Lopez was the ringleader. From his cell, he called victims, wrote sales scripts, and directed outside accomplices who picked up packages, sold coins and moved money. Nine defendants were charged. All but one have entered plea agreements, with the final case pending.

The Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry Office of the Inspector General and the Arizona Department of Public Safety jointly investigated

the case. Former Assistant Attorney General Amy Diederich and Assistant Attorney General Mariana Sanchez of the Fraud and Special Prosecutions Section prosecuted it.

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