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Founder of anti-gang group arrested

By Sam Quinones, Times Staff Writer
June 1, 2007

The founder of an anti-gang organization known as No Guns, once funded by the city of Los Angeles, was arrested Thursday and charged with selling firearms to federal undercover officers.

Hector "Big Weasel" Marroquin, 51, was arrested at his home in the 8000 block of 6th Street in Downey, said Susan Raichel, a spokeswoman for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

He was charged with the sale of an assault rifle, a machine gun, two pistols and two silencers, Raichel said.

As part of the same investigation, Sylvia Arrellano, 25, was also arrested at a home on Elizabeth Street in Cudahy, and faces the same charges, Raichel said.

Agents raided a junkyard Marroquin owns in the 4000 block of Mason Street in South Gate, and his restaurant, Marroking Seafood and Bar, in the 7000 block of Atlantic Avenue in Cudahy, Raichel said.

At each location, agents found gang photos and writings, she said.

Raichel said the arrests came as part of a nine-month investigation into weapons sales by the 18th Street gang, believed to be the largest in California.

A onetime member of the gang, Marroquin founded the group No Guns in 1996, which purported to work against gang and gun violence in inner-city communities.

Marroquin claimed to have helped more than 60 gang members find jobs in labor unions.

The city eventually added No Guns to its L.A. Bridges anti-gang program. No Guns received \$1.5 million from the city before its subcontract was canceled last year.

The action came after revelations that Marroquin hired many of his relatives at No Guns — including his son, Hector "Little Weasel" Marroquin — followed by his arrest last year in Hawthorne on weapons charges.

That case is still pending.

In a 2005 interview with The Times, Marroquin said he turned away from a life of crime after the shooting of his son and the gang peacemaking effort that followed.

In 1998, Marroquin was tried and acquitted of weapons charges.

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