

Name: Alert ID: TMML202403523092 The leader of El Salvador's Taxis Cartel, Jose Misael Cisneros Rodriguez, alias "Medio Millon" (Half a Million), allegedly silenced a witness who knew about his criminal history in the United States. "Medio Millon" is under investigation for the murder of a man who witnessed crimes committed in the United States. Cisneros turned to a leader of the Fulton Locos Salvatrucha, imprisoned in Zacatecoluca, to kill a man who had knowledge of Cisneros' illicit businesses. Cisneros called "El Kobra" in the Zacatecoluca maximum security prison in early 2010, to ask him to give him the green light to move against Santos Salvador Sanchez Regalado, who had been deported to the United States and who Medio Millon had met in Massachusetts when the two men both lived there in the early 2000s. Sanchez knew too much about Cisneros' affairs in El Salvador and in North America. Oscar Arturo Vasquez Alfaro, alias "el Kobra" o "Dragon el Fulton," broker for the Mara Salvatrucha Programa Fulton in El Salvador, and associate of Medio Millon, was the man to help with the job. El Kobra and his clique proved effective. On February 3, at just before four in the afternoon, Juan Jose Chavez, aged 54, identified the body of his son, Santos Salvador Chavez Regalado, aged 26, on the main street of the Barrancón neighborhood, in the Sunapa Canton, Nueva Concepción. "The body has various entry wounds made by firearms. At the crime scene there were 9 mm shells and blood splatters...Neighbors reported hearing multiple gunshots at 10:30. The deceased was driving on a 1983 Yamaha motorbike, which was yellow with blue stripes and had plates M 52-140," read the police report, which was added to the summary prepared by the National Civil Police's (PNC) investigatory body in August 2010, part of the prosecutor's investigation. That record also contained a revelation about Cisneros Rodriguez's past, one that has a narrow relation to the US Treasury Department's recent decision to include Cisneros on the list of six MS-13 members mentioned as "objectives" for American law enforcement and prosecutors. A witness who spoke to the PNC in 2010 said that Medio Millon had joined a gang involved in drug trafficking in Massachusetts between the late 1990s and the end of 2000. The witness also said that Santos Chavez's knowledge of this was one of the reasons that El Kobra's men killed him. "The witness indicates that there was communication between the two subjects Oscar Vasquez Alfaro ("el Dragon de Fulton") and Jose Misael Cisneros Rodriguez ("Medio Millon") about the homicide. The victim knew about the drug trafficking and extortion operations run by "El Dragon de Fulton" for Programa Fulton, and about the drug sales and homicides committed by "Medio Millon." The victim knew even more about "Medio Millon's" drug trafficking operations when the two knew each other in Massachusetts, given that at that time "Medio Millón" belonged to a gang that operated in that US state," read the police report. US state and federal authorities, along with Massachusetts district court records, attest that Cisneros lived in Massachusetts between 1998 and 2009. Local police records indicate that he was in Nantucket, an island 48 kilometers outside the port of Boston, in 1998, 2006, and 2009, and judicial records indicate that he was involved in civil cases in 2001 and 2002. Although Massachusetts criminal court records do not indicate that there are currently proceedings open against Cisneros, police in Washington confirmed that he was a person of interest over the last decade in Boston in relation to multiple drug trafficking investigations. A unique case The attorney general's office investigated Cisneros and 34 members of the Fulton Locos Salvatrucha (FLS) for the murder of Chavez Regalado, as well as five other people who received orders from El Kobra from inside Zacatecoluca prison in 2010. That was the year that "Medio Millón" managed to escape an operation mounted to execute the arrest warrant issued by a judge for those cases, thanks to a timely warning from a deputy police inspector, say sources in the PNC, the attorney general's office, and US law enforcement. Police intelligence reports on these crimes say that the majority of the victims are "members of the same gang, killed for having broken the rules. An example of this is the 'Magaly' case, in which a gang member asked el Kobra to greenlight the murder of another 'homie's' girlfriend in retaliation for betraying him. Intergang rivalry is also a frequent cause of homicides." Only the murder of Santos Chavez, the old acquaintance from Massachusetts, has a distinct motive, according to investigators: silencing a potential witness in cases related to the United States and drug trafficking. The leader of the hitmen, a gang member named Pedro Quintanilla, alias "El Serio," took advantage of the situation to recover a personal debt, says the police report. After taking the first bullets, Santos Chavez fell flat on the dusty road, a few meters from his motorbike. The gunmen arrived to finish him off. "El Serio" went through the victim's pockets and found \$200, which he later used to pay back a small drug debt he owned. Medio Millon, in addition to asking his associate

Oscar Arturo, El Kabra o “Dragon de Fulton” to organized the hit, also provided the arms, as he usually did: two AK-47s and five 9 mm pistols from Honduras. *Translated and published with permission from Hector Silva Avalos. See the original Spanish version at La Prensa Grafica and other stories by Silva at his blog. CLALS, where Silva is a fellow, is a sponsor of InSight Crime’s work.