

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

July 29, 2025

Reward Reestablishment in the Homicide Investigation of Murder Victim Ismael Zabala

Write preamble On Sunday, December 20, 2020, at approximately 2:30 a.m., Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies responded to an assault, gunshot victim call in the 400 block of West Avenue J-12 in the City of Lancaster. Responding deputies found 26-year-old Ismael Zabala suffering from a single gunshot wound to the upper torso. Victim Zabala was transported to a local hospital and was subsequently pronounced deceased. A second victim, Ismael Zabala's brother, Charlie Zabala was also struck by gunfire. Charlie was also transported to a local hospital and his injuries were determined to be non-life threatening.

It was later learned Victim Zabala was attending a cousin's birthday party and was murdered in front of his family members while standing at the front door of the residence. Mr. Zabala was recently honorably discharged from the United States Army and his family is completely distraught by this senseless tragedy.

During the investigation, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Homicide Investigators (LASD Investigators) identified Oscar Palazuelos and Ervin Alvarez as being involved in Ismael Zabala's murder and willful injury to his brother, Charlie Zabala.

Warrants for the arrest of the two suspects for murder and felon in possession of a firearm were issued for each suspect. Ervin Alvarez was subsequently located and arrested, and Oscar Palazuelos remains outstanding.

The \$10,000 reward offer approved by this Board on June 22, 2021, was extended on September 15, 2021, extended on March 15, 2022, extended on September 13, 2022, extended on March 7, 2023, extended on August 8, 2023, extended March 6, 2024,

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extended August 6, 2024, and expired February 2, 2025.

To date, LASD investigators have not been able to locate murder suspect Oscar Palazuelos and believe he knows he is wanted and has gone into hiding. LASD Investigators believe the extension of the reward will bring forth witnesses who may have additional information on this homicide and the whereabouts of murder suspect Palazuelos. The family, who have been helpful during the investigation and remain in contact with the investigators, are devastated by this senseless tragedy. Any individuals with information about this crime are urged to contact LASD or Crime Stoppers.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD reestablish the reward previously offered in the amount of \$10,000 in exchange for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of the perpetrators responsible for the fatal shooting of 26-year-old Ismael Zabala and the willful injury to his brother, Charlie Zabala.

CONTACTS:

LASD/Homicide Bureau

Lt. Michael Gomez

Sgt. Cynthia Toone

Office: (323) 890-5554

Los Angeles Regional Crime Stoppers Hotline

(800) 222-TIPS (8477)

<http://lacrimestoppers.org>

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