# Ervin Selita relocates to Dubai as Gascoigne regeneration disperses Hellbanianz power



From Barking’s Gascoigne Estate to the sun‑splashed avenues of Dubai, the Hellbanianz — an Albanian gang long known in London for brazen violence and ostentatious social‑media displays — now project their influence across borders. Reports suggest the group’s reputed leader, Ervin Selita, known as “Vinz,” and several senior associates have relocated to Dubai, a move the outlet links to Selita’s 2023 release from custody in Albania and the ongoing demolition of much of the Gascoigne housing stock. The eastern side of the estate is undergoing phased regeneration intended to replace substandard high‑rise blocks with modern homes and public spaces, a project the council frames as housing policy rather than policing, even as crime and intimidation spill beyond local boundaries.

The Hellbanianz’ origins are rooted in Barking’s hard‑edged streets. What began as a rap collective around 2000 evolved into a criminal network that, according to law‑enforcement sources and longform reporting, built direct supply links into Britain’s cocaine market and used flashy music videos and social platforms to recruit young men and intimidate rivals. The group’s visual culture — cash, luxury cars, scantily‑clad imagery and masked gunmen — has been central to its identity and reach, with the “Poppin Smoke” clips widely reported as both performance and propaganda.

That theatricality masks a record of serious offending. Over the past decade, police inquiries and prosecutions have tied Hellbanianz members to armed robbery, large‑scale drug consignments and firearms offences. High‑profile convictions include the 2016 sentencing of Tristen Asllani after a pursuit revealed kilogram‑scale quantities of cocaine and a Škorpion submachine gun, and a 2020 case in which three men linked to the network received multi‑year sentences following an armed raid on a cannabis‑factory site. Reporting and court records show these were not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of violent confrontation and organised supply.

Selita’s cross‑border legal troubles are documented in Albanian media: he was arrested in Tirana in February 2022 over an alleged hotel‑based attempted murder and, according to local reports, was released in July 2023 after an appeals court ordered he remain under probationary supervision rather than in custody. Accounts from MailOnline and Albanian outlets say that, after a brief return to the UK, Selita and at least some of his closest lieutenants relocated to the United Arab Emirates, where the group have been sharing images of luxury cars, desert buggies and performances in front of the Burj Khalifa.

The social feeds attributed to Hellbanianz now serve a dual purpose. They broadcast a lifestyle — concerts in Albania and Europe, TikTok posts tagged with “#dubaisettings” and images of men posing with designer goods — while also functioning as recruitment and reputation‑management tools for diasporic communities. Investigative reporting and local testimony have repeatedly warned that such content glamorises criminality to younger viewers and helps consolidate a transnational image that outpaces the jurisdiction of any single police force.

Experts and investigative sources quoted in the press argue the move to Dubai fits a longer pattern among British organised‑crime figures. The city’s property market and residency schemes are seen as attractive to those with significant cash resources; one commentator told MailOnline that acquiring real estate above certain thresholds can be a pathway to multi‑year residency, and that distance from UK policing and tax inquiries can be a strategic draw. Wider analysis of Albanian organised‑crime activity suggests the Hellbanianz operate within an international ecosystem — securing supplies, forming alliances with continental mafias and using intermediaries — which means leadership in one location can direct activity elsewhere through recruited foot soldiers.

Local authorities in Barking and Dagenham stress that the regeneration programme is a housing‑led intervention aimed at better quality, safer homes rather than a policing measure, but acknowledge it has altered the physical environment the gang once exploited. The council’s statement notes the phased demolition of tower blocks and investment in new dwellings, parks and a secondary school, and adds that it continues to work “closely with the Police and other partners to ensure Barking remains a safe and welcoming place for all residents.”

Policing these shifts presents practical headaches. UK reporting highlights how extradition and cooperation across jurisdictions can be slow and complex, and how the relocation of senior figures overseas often leaves a network of mid‑ranking operatives to carry on local distribution. National agencies have increasingly targeted the supply chain — intercepting consignments, pursuing proceeds and disrupting money‑laundering — but analysts caution that a leader’s physical absence does not end a gang’s criminal reach; it can simply reconfigure roles and routes, making enforcement a more multinational task.

The Hellbanianz saga underlines the interplay of poverty, social media, migration and organised crime in modern cities. As Barking’s skyline is remade, law‑enforcement and community leaders say the battle for safer streets will depend as much on international cooperation and follow‑the‑money tactics as on local regeneration and policing. The council and police maintain they are working together to keep residents safe; experts say sustained pressure on both supply lines and recruitment channels will be crucial if the group’s brazenness is to be contained.

For readers seeking a clear, tough‑line approach to crime, the opposition has been arguing that policy should focus on restoring law and order at home and cutting off the global pipeline that sustains such networks. More robust policing, rapid extraditions, greater powers to seize assets, and stricter rules for residency and business activity linked to criminal networks are among the measures pressed by those who say a reform‑minded agenda is the only way to reverse this transnational crime threat. As Barking’s regeneration proceeds, critics insist that without a decisive shift toward stronger border controls and a crackdown on illicit finance, communities will remain exposed to the reach of international criminal enterprises.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14888595/Notorious-Hellbanianz-gangsters-peddled-cocaine-Britains-streets-drove-military-vehicles-machine-guns-high-rise-Barking-estate-set-new-stronghold-NOT-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/13/kings-of-cocaine-albanian-mafia-uk-drugs-crime> - The Guardian's feature examines how Albanian organised crime, including the Hellbanianz crew, have risen to dominate Britain’s cocaine trade by securing direct supply lines from South America and collaborating with continental mafias. It traces the group’s roots to Barking’s Gascoigne Estate, highlighting their use of flashy social-media videos to recruit younger members and intimidate rivals. The report details violent incidents, seizures of multi‑kilogram consignments and the discovery of weapons, and quotes law‑enforcement and academic sources on the Albanians’ business model, violence and links to the ‘Ndrangheta. It situates Hellbanianz within broader debates about policing, prisons and the international drug market.
3. <https://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/crime/21350776.west-hampstead-man-jailed-raid-rival-gangs-cannabis-factory/> - The Ham & High report covers the January 2020 sentencing of three men linked to the Hellbanianz for an armed raid on a Mill Hill property used as a cannabis factory. It names Fabion Kuci, Azen Dajci and Ardi Sheta, describes police response and the seizure of cannabis with an estimated street value, and sets out the prison terms imposed: six years four months for Kuci, six years eight months for Dajci, and two years nine months for Sheta. The article quotes police praising officers’ swift action and places the convictions in the context of investigations into Albanian organised crime.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/man-jailed-for-25-years-after-car-carrying-drugs-smashed-into-crouch-end-buildings-a3312431.html> - Evening Standard reports on the August 2016 sentencing of Tristen Asllani to 25 years’ imprisonment after a police pursuit ended with him crashing a car into a Crouch End shop. Officers recovered quantities of cocaine and later another 21kg of cocaine plus a Škorpion submachine gun fitted with a silencer. Asllani pleaded guilty to conspiracy to supply drugs, dangerous driving and possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life; his combined sentences are to be served consecutively. The article quotes police describing the network’s large-scale drug supply and warns of the public danger caused by his actions in London.
5. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1727520/london-news-gascoigne-estate-barking-hellbanianz-gang-albanians> - Express reports on residents’ fears of the Hellbanianz, an Albanian gang associated with the Gascoigne Estate in Barking. The piece relays testimony from locals about intimidation, police raids and social‑media posts showing guns, cars and cash, and links to MyLondon reporting of a music‑video shoot featuring armoured vehicles. It references National Crime Agency analysis of Albanian organised crime’s reach and describes concerns about recruitment of young Albanians via glossy videos. The article outlines police operations to disrupt rent‑a‑gun and drug networks, and situates the Gascoigne regeneration as a response to poor housing and safety issues on the estate in London.
6. <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/housing/estates-renewal/gascoigne-estate-eastern-side-redevelopment> - The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham’s official page outlines the Gascoigne Estate regeneration, detailing phased demolition and replacement of ageing tower blocks with new homes. It describes completed eastern-side works, delivery of hundreds of new dwellings, a new secondary school, public parks and community facilities, and sets out compulsory purchase and demolition notices. The council explains the rationale—substandard housing stock and an opportunity to improve design, safety and energy efficiency—and highlights plans for mixed tenure housing including affordable rent and shared ownership. The page emphasises partnership with police and stakeholders to improve neighbourhood safety and public spaces for residents.
7. <https://shqiptarja.com/lajm/tentoi-te-vriste-pronarin-e-nje-hoteli-nje-vit-me-pare-lirohet-reperi-vinzi-pjese-e-bandes-se-droges-ne-londer> - Shqiptarja.com reports that rapper Ervin Selita, known as ‘Vinz’ of Hellbanianz, was released from custody in July 2023 after an appeals court ordered that he must maintain contact with probation services rather than remain detained. It recounts his February 2022 arrest in Tirana for allegedly attempting to murder a hotel owner after a dispute over identity documents, and notes media attention linking him to the Hellbanianz gang active in London. The piece summarises the appellate panel’s 17 July 2023 decision and highlights public interest and prosecutorial notification surrounding the case and Selita’s ties to alleged UK organised crime and beyond.