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L.A. CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO SEEKS INJUNCTION AGAINST NOTORIOUS VALLEY GANG

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, the City's chief prosecutor, today announced his office's Gang Division has joined with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office to file a civil lawsuit seeking a preliminary injunction restricting the criminal activity of the San Fer Gang in the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando.

"For too long, the San Fer gang has used intimidation, violence and fear to hold this community in the San Fernando Valley hostage to its insidious activities," said City Attorney Delgadillo. "Working closely with the District Attorney's Office, we will continue to find new and creative ways to curb illegal activity in our neighborhoods and to bring needed safety and security to our residents."

Filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, the proposed gang injunction would severely restrict the ability of the gang to engage in criminal and nuisance activities within the established Safety Zone as defined as a 9.5 square mile area covering territory bounded by Interstate 5 (Golden State Freeway) to the West, Interstate 210 (Foothill Freeway) to the North and East and State Highway 118 (Ronald Reagan Freeway) to the South.

Terms of the proposed injunction include many of the standard gang injunction provisions, including limiting the gang's ability to associate in public with other members, intimidate witnesses, to sell or possess drugs, or to possess weapons or graffiti tools.

The injunction also includes provisions for gang members to stay away from Sylmar Recreation center, an area known to be used by the San Fers gang to hold meetings, engage in gang fights and graffiti vandalism, intimidate and threaten students from nearby Sylmar High School and Olive Vista Middle School, as well as actively recruit new members.

District Attorney Steve Cooley said, "San Fer is a territorial and violent criminal street gang that has been terrorizing citizens in northeastern Los Angeles County for years. The Chief of Police in San Fernando asked the District Attorney's Hardcore Gang Division to partner with the City Attorney to prevent his city from becoming a safe harbor for San Fers seeking to avoid terms of the injunction. We readily agreed. As noted in our recent gang report, our experience with these injunctions countywide starting in the early 1990s is that they work. Neighborhoods have been returned to the law-abiding citizens living there."

The injunction – filed in coordination with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office – includes declarations from law enforcement officials regarding the long-standing criminal activity of the San Fer gang, including terrorizing members of the community through assaults, threats, graffiti vandalism, trespassing, loitering on public streets as well as continued violence with rival street gangs in the area.

According to law enforcement officials, the San Fer gang has claimed the area within the proposed Safety Zone for decades as its territory for nuisance activity, including the sale of methamphetamine and marijuana. Members of the San Fer gang are known to use weapons and violence to facilitate the drug trade in the area.

The next hearing for the preliminary injunction is scheduled for June 24, Department 86 of the Los Angeles Superior Court.

"I look forward to the added tool this San Fer Gang Injunction will provide to our officers, said Deputy Chief Michel Moore, commanding officer, Operations-Valley Bureau. "Simply said, Gang Injunctions work. They give communities the chance to reclaim their neighborhoods from the caustic impact of gang members. LAPD is grateful for the resources that the District and City Attorney Offices have provided as well as our partners, the San Fernando Police Department."

Gang injunctions have are widely recognized to be extremely useful in reducing gang activity in Safety Zones. Crucial components in aiding the effectiveness of gang injunctions include sentencing enhancements for gang members who violate the terms of their injunctions, innovative probationary conditions, and a partnership with L.A. County Sheriff Lee Baca to ensure gang members jailed for injunction violations serve their full terms. A first violation of the injunction can result in up to six months in custody – with gang enhancements the maximum sentence is one year in custody for each violation.

To supplement the injunctions, Delgadillo has proposed a larger anti-gang legislative package as a part of his comprehensive anti-gang plan. Assembly Bill 1013, which was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger last fall, provides city prosecutors and City Attorneys in certain cities with the ability protect innocent residents by evicting tenants who are either in possession of illegal weapons or are illegally possessing weapons and ammunition.

Current proposed legislation would: allow City Attorneys to help victims by bringing actions for damages against the leaders of violent criminal street gangs (SB 1126 - Cedillo); create new sentencing enhancements for crimes affecting children as well as expand existing "Safety Zones" around California schools (SB 1666 - Calderon); would allow out-of-court statements to become admissible when gang members take action to stop witnesses from testifying in court (AB 268 - Calderon); would allow for prosecution of those adults who solicit or recruit a minor to actively participate in a criminal street gang (AB 1033) - Caballero).

Since taking office in July 2001, City Attorney Delgadillo has utilized injunctions as an effective tool for law enforcement and prosecutions, adopting and adapting conditions specific to each gang. He's increased the number of gang injunctions from eight to 36, covering more than 56 gangs and more than 61 square miles of claimed gang territory in Los Angeles. In addition, LAPD reports cite a 33 percent decline in gang membership since 2001.

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