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Contact: Frank Mateljan
(213) 978-8340 (O)
(213) 479-5675 (M)

CITY ATTORNEY DELGADILLO AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY COOLEY SECURE PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION AGAINST NOTORIOUS SAN FERS GANG

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, the City’s chief prosecutor, today announced his office’s Gang Division in partnership with the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office Hardcore Gang Division have successfully secured a preliminary injunction restricting the criminal activity of the San Fer Gang in the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando.

“I am pleased that the court has today given law enforcement another valuable tool in suppressing the violent and criminal activity of the San Fer gang,” said City Attorney Delgadillo. “Public safety will continue to be my top priority and this injunction will contribute to our shared goal of improving the safety and quality of life in Sylmar. I would also like to express my appreciation for the overwhelming vote of public support we have received from the communities of Sylmar and Mission Hills where the Safety Zone is located.”

“The Los Angeles Police Department extends its appreciation to the court for supporting this injunction as we believe it will be an important tool in providing a meaningful reduction in gang violence and intimidation in the Sylmar community,” said Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Michael Moore.

The approved 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. This Safety Zone is believed to be the largest single safety zone in Los Angeles in terms of square miles.

Judge David Yaffe approved terms of the injunction which 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. The San Fers use this facility to hold meetings, engage in gang fights and graffiti vandalism. The injunction also bars members of the gang from intimidating and threatening students from nearby Sylmar High School and Olive Vista Middle School, as well as from actively recruiting new members.

The injunction – filed in April 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.

Within the past week, the injunction was discussed and endorsed by the Sylmar and Mission Neighborhood Councils following a presentation by the City Attorney’s Gang Division as a means of addressing the serious gang problem found in the San Fernando Valley.

Gang injunctions are 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 to 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 37, covering more than 57 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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