

United States Department of Justice

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Operation Save Our Streets Joint Task Force in Los Angeles**

LOS ANGELES—Through the generous support of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Criminal Gang Homicide Division has an opportunity to make the streets of South Los Angeles safer. Historically, the areas of Los Angeles that are within the purview of responsibility for Operations-South Bureau (OSB) lead the City in violent gang homicides. Approximately 70-80 percent of all homicides in OSB can be linked to violent street gangs. Over 1,000 unsolved homicides have accumulated since 1978. In March 2007, the criminal Gang/Homicide Division (CGHD) was activated to reorganize and centralize homicide investigations, reduce the incidence of violent gang crimes and develop meaningful strategies to intervene in gang disputes and save lives. The CGHD is comprised of three distinct entities; Homicide Detectives from 77th Street, Southeast and Southwest Areas, Bureau Gang Enforcement Detail and the Violent Crime Task Force. This approach emphasizes a full spectrum approach to gang homicides and facilitates a unique partnership with a variety of law enforcement agencies to aggressively apprehend and prosecute murder suspects.

The primary focus of the Los Angeles Police Department's 2009 crime fighting strategies was on gang related crime. While gang crime in Los Angeles is down, a recent spike in homicides and gang-related shootings have emerged. Criminal Gang/Homicide Division investigated 126 homicides in 2008, 108 homicides in 2009, and 50 homicides year-to-date.

The resources being provided by the FBI will augment a successful Safe Streets Task Force already in existence in Los Angeles. The spike in homicides in Los Angeles can be attributed to gang violence; much of which can be attributed to gangs already targeted for investigation by the FBI and the LAPD for federal and state prosecution. Over the last year, FBI Safe Streets Task Forces in the Los Angeles Region have arrested more than 700 gang members from over a dozen gangs. The recent spike in gang related homicides requires an even greater proactive investigative and prosecutive strategy in order to enhance current SSTF gang investigations, curtail the increases in gang-related homicides and identify new gang and criminal enterprise threats within the City of Los Angeles.

The FBI's Safe Streets Task Forces operate nationwide to assist local law enforcement by addressing violent crime in American cities. The FBI operates more than 200 Safe Streets Task Forces in the U.S. with participation from over 500 law enforcement agencies.

Los Angeles is the birthplace of many gangs that have migrated to almost every state and many countries. Los Angeles is also a city at the forefront in terms of fighting gangs. Law enforcement in Los Angeles at the local and federal level proactively address local, regional, national and international gang violence using tools and strategies that set the investigative and prosecutive

trends for the rest of the nation. The collaboration formed through the S.O.S. initiative will support open investigations into gangs and criminal enterprises operating in the city of Los Angeles that also have tentacles reaching cities across the United States, Central America and beyond. Gang-related violence incubated in Los Angeles is a crime issue that affects the United States and is appropriately being addressed by the federal government, as well as locally.

The Operation Save Our Streets (SOS) Joint Task Force will identify homicide investigations and target violent homicide suspects who are identified as being involved in the homicides and impacting the South Los Angeles area. The task force will enhance the effectiveness of federal/state/local law enforcement resources through a coordinated initiative seeking the most effective investigative avenues to apprehend and convict homicide suspects.

The task force will focus on unsolved homicide cases. The cases will be assigned to investigators based on knowledge of the case, experience, training, performance, expertise and existing case load. The investigators will identify, locate, and interview witnesses and suspects, prepare and serve search warrants and arrest warrants, conduct surveillances, develop shared informants and exhaust all leads on the case with the ultimate goal of presenting to the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office for filing consideration.

The Operation Save Our Streets (SOS) Joint Task Force will begin a three month operational period starting on July 1, 2010, through September 30, 2010. The primary focus will be to identify, investigate and clear unsolved homicides within South Bureau that have a high probability of being solved. None of this could have occurred without the assistance of the FBI.