

Highlights

Federal Assistance Available in Reducing Gang Violence

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PROSECUTING GANG CASES oftentimes requires an extraordinary commitment of resources. Prosecutors can find themselves pulled in many directions, especially when having to marshal several homicides, assaults, narcotics cases, and other acts, from multiple jurisdictions or countries, into one seamless gang indictment or trial.

The Department of Justice recognizes the increasingly daunting task of building a complex gang case, especially in an era of smaller prosecutorial staffs and reduced litigation budgets.

In that regard, in 2006, then-Deputy Attorney General McNulty created three new DOJ entities specifically designed to support and enhance the Department's mission to reduce gang violence and gang crime through aggressive, thorough prosecution of local, regional, national and transnational gangs. These three entities are the Gang Unit, the Gang Targeting, Enforcement and Coordination Center (GangTECC), and the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC). Each provide unique resources that federal and local prosecutors can use to obtain assistance in their gang prosecutions or to enhance their investigations, indictments or trials.

THE GANG UNIT

The Criminal Division's Gang Unit is a specialized group of federal prosecutors charged with developing and implementing strategies to attack the most significant national and transnational gangs operating in the United States. These prosecutors assist and coordinate with local United States Attorney's Offices on legal issues and multi-district cases, and work with numerous domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies to construct effective and coordinated prevention and enforcement strategies, formulate policy, and prosecute select gang cases of national importance. The Gang Unit is also charged with providing legal expertise on a variety of federal domestic violent crime offenses and on violations of federal firearms and explosives laws.

Since its inception, the Gang Unit has actively recruited experienced prosecutors with diverse backgrounds in order to fulfill its varied mission. The unit therefore can draw on an experienced pool of talent to answer questions from the field on a variety of legal and technical questions. To that end, the Gang Unit recently activated a listserv dedicated to gang issues. The listserv—GangLink—is an online community of gang unit prosecutors and anti-gang coordinators from every United States Attorney's Office in the country. Through a simple telephone call to Unit Chief Kevin Carwile (202.514.3705) or Deputy Chief Jim Trusty (202.307.0207, James.Trusty@usdoj.gov), a prosecutor can pose any question related to gang cases or cases involving crimes of violence. If the Gang Unit does not have an answer, GangLink may be used to seek information from its subscribers. For example, a quick call or e-mail might help a prosecutor seeking information related to a gang expert identified by the defense in a gang case. Through either e-mail or by telephone, the Gang Unit is always available to answer any gang or violent crime question a prosecutor may have.

Since its inception, the Gang Unit has been involved in MS-13, Latin King, Outlaw, and other gang investigations across the United States. By providing advice, information, and/or experienced trial attorneys, the Gang Unit seeks to support the United States Attorneys' Offices and state and local prosecutors in their efforts to disrupt and dismantle violent street gangs in the United States.

Two other new anti-gang DOJ entities—GangTECC and NGIC—offer a variety of tools to gang investigators and gang prosecutors.

GANGTECC

The Department of Justice's National Gang Targeting, Enforcement & Coordination Center (GangTECC) began operations in summer 2006 as the national anti-gang task force created by the attorney general. In accordance with the attor-

ney general's directive, GangTECC is a multi-agency center designed to serve as a critical catalyst in a unified federal effort to help disrupt and dismantle the most significant and violent gangs in the United States. The center is headed by a senior criminal division prosecutor with extensive experience in multi-agency and multi-district investigations and prosecutions, as well as information sharing.

The senior investigators at GangTECC come from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Marshals Service (USMS) and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Department of Homeland Security.

The four primary goals of GangTECC are:

- To assist in the initiation of gang-related investigations and enhance existing investigations and prosecutions.
- To aid in the coordination, de-confliction, and effectiveness of gang-related initiatives, investigations and prosecutions.
- To develop an enhanced understanding of the national gang problem and propose strategies to neutralize the most violent and significant threats.
- To coordinate with and support the National Gang Intelligence Center.

GangTECC's ultimate goal is to achieve maximum impact at the national level against the most violent gangs in this country. To further this goal, GangTECC is intended to provide "one stop shopping" via phone and e-mail for local, state and federal investigators and prosecutors engaged in significant anti-gang efforts. GangTECC, through the participation of its member agencies, can offer either direct support for those engaged in anti-gang initiatives or can connect interested parties to appropriate officials to provide guidance or assistance. In many instances, specific assistance, coordination or access to information developed in related cases would be invaluable to an ongoing gang investigation or prosecution.

The senior agents assigned to GangTECC work in close collaboration with the Gang Unit prosecutors in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice and with the analysts and others at the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC).

NGIC

Since its inception, the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) has made great strides toward collecting, consolidating, and analyzing disparate pieces of intelligence from multiple federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Designed to be a one-stop-shop for gang intelligence, the NGIC has developed an integrated approach to networking contacts, information systems, and raw intelligence.

Currently the NGIC is comprised of analysts from seven federal agencies (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; Federal Bureau of Prisons; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Drug Enforcement Administration; Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Marshals Service; and the National Drug Intelligence Center). Working together, these analysts strive to understand the trends, patterns and threats that gangs pose across the nation. Analysts focus mainly on multi-jurisdictional gangs, many with regional or national connectivity, to provide both tactical and strategic support to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Over the past several years, NGIC analysts have prepared threat assessments in several states, documented emerging threats in the military and across the country; and provided tactical case support for high-profile operations and prosecutions. A customer-oriented entity, NGIC analysts will utilize their networks and technology to address a variety of requests for information, support, and training.

Furthermore, to ensure the rapid exchange of intelligence among law enforcement agencies, NGIC continues to identify and develop new technology that will enable law enforcement across the country to have access to many different intelligence products and tools. To that end, the NGIC has acquired, or is in the process of acquiring, access to several databases utilized by law enforcement across the country, including, GangNET, CalGang, I-CLEAR, and R-Dex. Additionally, the NGIC is developing a tattoo and graffiti database that will enable users to search and identify unknown images using advanced image recognition technology.

The NGIC will continue to evolve to meet the needs of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies across the country.

Requests for intelligence, strategic analytical support, tactical support, training, or general information can be directed to the NGIC at 703.414.8600; 703.414.8554 (fax); ngic@leo.gov; or via the NGIC SIG Web site on www.leo.gov.

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