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GIT OPERATION IN PALM SPRINGS AREA TARGETS VIOLENT CRIMINAL STREET GANG

PALM SPRINGS – Today, Dec. 16, 2020, the Riverside County Gang Impact Team (GIT), assisted by the Palm Springs Police Department, conducted an operation in and around Palm Springs targeting a violent criminal street gang.

The predawn raids targeted a dozen locations connected to a criminal street gang which calls itself Barrio San Rafael (BSR). The purpose of the operation is an effort to quell the gang violence between rival gangs based on a rash of shootings and to collect evidence of crimes committed by gang members.

Since October 2019, there have been dozens of gang-related shootings in two specific areas of the city frequented by BSR and another rival criminal street gang in Palm Springs. In July and August 2020, three people were shot to death in separate gang drive-by shootings involving suspected BSR gang members exchanging gunfire with a rival gang.

On July 31, 2020, two people, ages 17 and 21, were shot to death during an exchange of gunfire in the area of Palm Vista and Granada Avenue in Palm Springs. Less than a month later, on Aug. 26, suspected BSR gang members again fired at a group of rival gang members in the Desert Highlands Gateway Estates area. There was an exchange of gunfire and a 15-year-old, who was believed to have been in the drive-by vehicle, was shot and killed.

In today's operation, which involved more than 100 law enforcement officers from various agencies, three adults were arrested in connection with an assault with a deadly weapon case being investigated by Palm Springs police. No firearms were recovered during the operation, but authorities did recover stolen property, gang indicia, and other items related to gang activity.

"I'm very proud of the excellent work from the Gang Impact Team," said District Attorney Mike Hestrin. "There is no place in our community for gang violence, assaults and shootings.

"These criminals terrorize our law-abiding citizens and destroy the peace and tranquility of our neighborhoods and communities," Hestrin added. "We are not always successful at preventing gang violence, but rest assured we do not and will not tolerate it."

Palm Springs Police Chief Bryan Reyes said: "Today's operation, once again, reinforces our commitment as a police department in partnership with the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation with a wide range of law enforcement agencies in our County to address crime.

"The violent crime that has plagued our City in recent months has been and will continue to be addressed by the Palm Springs Police Department and our law enforcement partners," Reyes added. "I am grateful that we have the ability to assemble more than one hundred law enforcement officers from various agencies to assist us in our investigations."

The Gang Impact Team is supervised by the DA's Bureau of Investigation. The team is comprised of investigators from the DA's Office and members of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Marshals Service, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Special Services Unit, and the Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, Beaumont, Banning, Hemet, Corona, and Riverside police departments.

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