



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS  
MAYOR MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU

Office of the Mayor  
Press Releases & Media Advisories



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**MAYOR LANDRIEU ANNOUNCES MULTI-AGENCY GANG UNIT OF LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS TO COMBAT GROUP VIOLENCE**

**NEW ORLEANS, LA**—Today, Mayor Mitch Landrieu joined local, federal and state law enforcement partners in announcing the creation of a Multi-Agency Gang Unit (Gang Unit) to combat gang and group violence in New Orleans. The goal of the Gang Unit is to reduce the number of violent crimes in New Orleans, especially murders committed by gangs and groups. The unit is an integral component of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy, a key initiative of the Mayor's NOLA FOR LIFE comprehensive murder reduction strategy. The Group Violence Reduction Strategy, pioneered by criminologist David Kennedy, is designed to address the relatively small number of people who are locked in various group dynamics on the streets, and who are responsible for an overwhelming majority of murders.

“Our message in this Group Violence Reduction effort is simple-- our community is demanding that the shooting stop,” said Mayor Landrieu. “We’re also making it known that there is help for those at risk and involved in group violence if they want it, and we are willing to assist them in getting that help. The creation of this Gang Unit is going to improve our ability to hold these gangs and groups accountable for murders their members commit. The rules have changed.”

The Gang Unit has been created within the ranks of the New Orleans Police Department with significant support from other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

The following agencies have pledged to dedicate the resources to start and maintain the Gang Unit:

- New Orleans Police Department (NOPD);
- Orleans Parish District Attorney’s Office (DA);
- Orleans Parish Sheriff’s Office (OPSO);
- Louisiana State Police (LSP);
- Parole Board of the Louisiana Department of Corrections;
- United States Attorney’s Office (USAO);
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI);
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF);
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA);
- United States Marshal’s Service (USMS); and
- United States Probation & Parole Office for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Like the current NOPD Homicide Division, the Gang Unit will be centrally located and have jurisdiction over

tasked with gathering evidence against violent gangs and all of their members that leads to the prosecution and conviction of entire violent gangs in either state or federal court on criminal conspiracy, street gang, or racketeering charges. The Gang Unit will conduct several simultaneous investigations on identified groups, which result in state and federal prosecutions of the groups, and not only their individual members, thereby removing the violent offenders who are responsible for the majority of violent crimes committed in the neighborhoods of New Orleans and the metropolitan area.

The Gang Unit will consist of six veteran NOPD detectives who have an understanding of the law of conspiracy, including one commanding officer with the supervisory rank of Sergeant.

NOPD Superintendent Ronal Serpas stated, "The Multi-Agency Gang Unit has been created to conduct long-term investigations to ensure long-term prison sentences for the most dangerous people among us. This effort is geared at holding our most violent gangs and groups accountable for their actions. Partnering with State and Federal law enforcement resources, we intend to do just that."

The District Attorney's office will provide two full-time Assistant DA's to handle legal issues, prosecution, and sentencing of the Gang Unit's conspiracy/gang cases in State Courts.

District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro said, "Today, the criminal justice system is more united than I have ever seen it in my entire career. Not only are we working to reduce the violence, but we are doing so in an unprecedented collaborative manner. The District Attorney's office looks forward to working with the Mayor, the NOPD, and our state and federal law enforcement partners in this endeavor."

The Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office will have one full-time Sheriff's Deputy of Supervisory Rank to act as a liaison between OPSO and the Gang Unit.

Sheriff Marlin Gusman said, "The Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office primary objective is increasing public safety. We are committed to working with this Multi-Unit Task Force to move aggressively in bringing criminals to prosecution. This program is another example of our local law enforcement agencies working together productively and innovatively to make our community safer."

Federal law enforcement agencies will have a number of agents involved in intelligence gathering and prosecution operations for the Gang Unit.

The United States Attorney's Office is providing two full-time Assistant United States Attorneys (AUSA's) to the Gang Unit. Among other duties, the USAO will offer training on how to target, investigate, charge, and prosecute historical/gang cases. The US Attorney's Office will also ensure that the most effective forum is selected for the prosecution of gang members for gang activities, whether it be in State or Federal Court.

United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana Jim Letten stated, "I am both excited and gratified by the forging of this federal-state-local integrated Gang Unit which will provide for the seamless sharing of essential intelligence and investigative capabilities of our most critical law enforcement partners. My special thanks go out to all of the leaders who are making this joint venture possible, and especially to Mayor Mitch Landrieu and NOPD Superintendent Ronal Serpas. Our existing capability of identifying, investigating, prosecuting, and dismantling violent gangs will be exponentially enhanced by this true force multiplier – which in turn will save innocent lives."

The FBI is assigning two special agents to the Gang Unit who are knowledgeable of the federal and state conspiracy laws and have extensive experience in covert investigations, including federal Title III wiretaps and undercover operations. The FBI will also provide the Gang Unit with intelligence it has gathered on gang members within New Orleans and their associates who may be supplying drugs to these gang members or are otherwise engaging in criminal activity.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Michael Anderson said, "The Multi-Agency Gang Unit will be a tremendous force multiplier and complementary asset to the FBI's Violent Crime Task Force and its Gang Task Force as we continue to dedicate as many resources as possible to address this serious criminal threat to the New Orleans community."

Gang Unit who have experience in investigating street gangs, firearms trafficking, and straw purchases within New Orleans.

ATF Special Agent in Charge Phillip Durham said, "Protecting our communities from the illegal use and trafficking of firearms is a major part of ATF's mission, and our primary goal is to reduce the number of homicides and other violent crimes committed with firearms. ATF will provide innovative technology, analytical investigative resources, and our dedicated agents to assist in this team effort. We are excited about partnering with this new unit and are committed to stopping the violence in New Orleans."

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is assigning one special agent to the Gang Unit who is knowledgeable of the state and federal conspiracy laws and has experience conducting federal Title III investigations.

DEA Special Agent in Charge Jimmy S. Fox III said, "Drugs and gangs have been the scourge of our society for decades. The Drug Enforcement Administration's involvement in the newly created Multi-Agency Gang Unit, as a part of the NOLA FOR LIFE initiative, represents an important commitment by DEA to our various local, state and federal counterparts, as well as the citizens of the greater New Orleans area that a stronger, more united and expansive front exists with this partnership than the deadly partnerships created by drugs and gangs. The men and women of DEA remain steadfast in our commitment to this endeavor."

The United States Marshals Service will work with the Gang Unit to assist in intelligence gathering on individual gang members within New Orleans, as well as assisting in the arrest of gang members once they have been charged and/or indicted in state or federal court.

State law enforcement agencies including the Louisiana State Police will be providing analytical and intelligence support regarding the tracking of gangs across the State of Louisiana.

"If we can reduce or eliminate the influence of organized criminal gangs in New Orleans we can have a profound impact on the safety of citizens and visitors. We simply cannot and will not permit street thugs to fuel the fear of crime victimization in our community. The State Police remains committed to being a part of the solution and look forward to supporting this collaborative initiative," said Colonel Mike Edmonson, Superintendent of the Louisiana State Police.

The U.S. Parole Office and the State Parole Office will assist the Unit in targeting those individuals who are currently under their jurisdiction and who have been identified by the Unit as a gang member or violent offender. Both agencies will have probation and parole officers assigned to the Gang Unit to assist with monitoring the activities of gang members, initiating appropriate revocation proceedings, and initiating and conducting interviews of gang members. In a partnership with the State Parole office, Mayor Landrieu has gotten a commitment that the State Parole Office will ensure that caseloads are lower for those supervising gang members.

Frank V. Palestina, Probation & Parole District Administrator for the New Orleans District Office said, "The Louisiana Division of Probation & Parole New Orleans District Office will share information with the Gang Unit and work to assist with monitoring the activities of gang members, initiating appropriate revocation proceedings, and conducting interviews of gang members under supervision. Probation & Parole will assign the supervision of gang members to a specific group of Probation & Parole Officers with reduced caseloads who will coordinate activities with the Gang Unit."

In May, Mayor Landrieu outlined the NOLA FOR LIFE murder reduction strategy. The five pillars of the NOLA FOR LIFE plan are:

- Stop the Shootings;
- Invest in Prevention;
- Promote Jobs and Opportunity;
- Get Involved and Rebuild Neighborhoods; and
- Improve the NOPD.

“We are all hands on deck,” closed Mayor Landrieu. “This effort will be successful. Again, this is not the path we want these young men to choose. We are doing what we can to offer them options and ways out—a way to flip their script and turn their lives around. We want them to be successful, contributing members of our community. But know that our local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies are working more closely together than ever before. We have a plan. And we are going to do our job which is to keep the streets of New Orleans safe for all.”

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