



# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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## **Multi-agency Investigation Targets Riverside-area Gangs**

Riverside, CA -- More than 150 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers Thursday morning served search and arrest warrants and conducted parole searches at locations in Riverside and Fontana targeting two violent street gangs, both with ties to the Mexican Mafia, capping a nearly two-year investigation that linked the groups to firearms and narcotics trafficking.

The enforcement action targeted members and associates of Casa Blanca street gangs who are charged in federal and state court documents with a host of crimes, including acts of violence, firearms violations and narcotics sales. Of the defendants located and taken into custody Thursday, two were arrested on state charges and parole violations, and three were arrested based on federal indictments. Illegal drugs, two firearms and ammunition were also seized.

The charges stem from investigations involving various federal, state, county and local agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Riverside/Jurupa Valley Regional Gang Task Force (GTF), West County Narcotics Task Force (WCNTF) and the Riverside Police Department.

“Our collective enforcement efforts in this case have dealt a significant blow to one of the most dangerous street gangs here in the Inland Empire,” said Debra Parker, the assistant special agent in charge who oversees ICE Homeland Security Investigations in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. “Today’s arrests should be welcome news for these communities, which have seen firsthand the blight of violence and crime that gangs like this incite. ICE Homeland Security Investigations

will continue to work with its state and local law enforcement partners to attack and neutralize the gang threat and take back our streets.”

“ATF will continue working with the Riverside Police Department to eradicate violent crime by putting violent criminals behind bars, utilizing state and federal laws to give the communities back to the citizens that reside there,” said John A. Torres, Special Agent in Charge ATF Los Angeles Field Division. “The arrests today will send a clear message to gang members that we, (law enforcement), are here to stay”.

“The Riverside Police Department is very grateful to our federal law enforcement partners in ICE, the DEA and the ATF, as well as the United States Attorney, for their vigorous pursuit of these violent criminals,” said Riverside Chief of Police Sergio G. Diaz. “I am looking forward to seeing these gang members committed to significant incarceration in the federal prison system. I am confident that the results of this investigation will help bring peace and a sense of normalcy to the good people of Casa Blanca.”

Criminal street gangs have terrorized the Casa Blanca community and have a long and violent history dating back over 50 years. Gang membership is estimated at 220 documented members and 64 associates. These gangs are responsible for homicides, narcotics trafficking, and numerous acts of violence; including a shooting at the Van Buren Drive In theatre last August in which gunfire was exchanged between gang rivals, leaving two injured and causing frightened movie patrons to flee for their lives.

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