



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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INSPECTOR GENERAL

January 19, 2022

Sheriff Alex Villanueva
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Hall of Justice, 8th Floor
211 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Sheriff Villanueva,

As you are aware, Penal Code section 13670, effective January 1, 2022, requires that law enforcement agencies maintain a policy prohibiting participation in law enforcement gangs, including groups that violate federal employment laws. The statute also requires law enforcement agencies to cooperate in inspector general investigations into the existence of such gangs. Given that you were a sponsor of the bill that enacted this statute and repeated your support after its passage¹, we hope for your full cooperation with the Office of Inspector General's investigation into deputy gangs within the Sheriff's Department.

In order to conduct our investigation, we again call upon you to reinstate the Office of Inspector General's access to PRMS and to grant us access to all body-worn camera videos, as well as to direct all county employees under your supervision to cooperate with the Office of Inspector General.

Our investigation will necessarily include questioning of departmental personnel regarding the membership and nature of potential deputy gangs. Based upon Penal Code section 13670, Government Code sections 25303 and 25303.7, Los Angeles County Code section 6.44.190, Los Angeles County Code section 18.031, *County of Los Angeles Department of Human Resources Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines* Policy Number 910, and Los Angeles County Code section 9.020, Sheriff's Department employees are required to cooperate with investigations conducted by the Office of Inspector General. Additionally, SB 2 amends section 13510.8 of the Penal Code to provide for decertification of peace officers for "failure to cooperate with an investigation into potential police misconduct," including those of suspected law enforcement gangs.

¹ <https://lasd.org/police-reform-legislation-ab-958/>

If Sheriff's Department employees were ordered not to cooperate in such an investigation, they could be placed in the untenable position of having to choose between facing discipline for insubordination or decertification and ineligibility to remain peace officers in California for failure to cooperate. We also ask that you confer with the unions representing County employees you supervise to promptly comply with California law and to avoid negative outcomes for county personnel.

To assist us in conducting interviews of Sheriff's Department personnel, we are requesting documents and information gathered by the Sheriff's Department regarding deputy gangs.² At the Civilian Oversight Commission meeting on December 17, 2020, you stated "the policy requires the Department to ID deputies who are encouraging others to join and violate the policy or the law"³ while referencing your internal policy against membership in deputy gangs (LASD Manual of Policy and Procedures section 3-01/050.83). Our request covers any past or present employees you have identified as being members of, suspected of being members of, or identified as promoting possible deputy gangs, such as by encouraging others to become members or facilitating gang activity, along with evidence and documentation relevant to these questions.

We request the following information for any potential member of a deputy gang that you have identified:

- Employee name
- Employee number
- Current assignment and contact information
- Photograph of the employee
- Photographs of any tattoos, including but not limited to, deputy gang or station tattoos
- Gender of the employee
- Race of the employee
- Sexual Orientation
- Reasons why they have been identified as a deputy gang member and any evidence supporting that conclusion or contradicting it
- The name of the associated deputy gang

² While you have publicly claimed that no deputy organizations qualify as "gangs," that term is now defined by statute in a manner that, based upon internal investigations conducted by your department, appears to include the Banditos and the Executioners due to their racial and gender composition. While that preliminary information may be disproven and the status of other groups may be less clear, California law now requires investigation into all groups that may potentially qualify. Accordingly, this communication seeks information on all groups that could potentially be determined to qualify as law enforcement gangs under Penal Code section 13670.

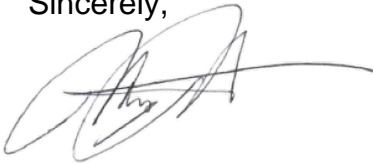
³ COC meeting on December 17, 2020 at 2:51:46.

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Please provide the requested information to us within 30 days. The Office of Inspector General is conducting this investigation to discharge statutory duties and not to support discipline charges. However, evidence produced will be provided to third parties as required by law, including pursuant to the County's constitutional obligations under *Brady v. Maryland* and in support of the law enforcement gang provisions of Penal Code section 13510.8, which also became effective on January 1, 2022.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max Huntsman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MAX HUNTSMAN
INSPECTOR GENERAL

MH:dew:sg

c: Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair
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