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Judge Grants Historic Injunction for DA's War on Gangs

Houston, Tx – A judge Monday granted the District Attorney's Office request for Harris County's first civil injunction to permanently ban criminal gang activity around a crime-infested apartment complex in the Northeast Harris County area.

State District Judge Alexandra Smoots-Hogan issued the permanent injunction against 47 documented members of the Bloods and Crips street gangs. Her order followed testimony and related evidence that the gangs posed a continuing threat to public safety to an estimated 2,400 residents of the Haverstock Hills Apartments. Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia testified as an expert witness concerning gang activity and related crime. Gang members and their activities are banned in a 57-acre safety zone that includes businesses and a nearby elementary school.

"The residents of Haverstock Hills are entitled to a safe home for themselves and their children," said District Attorney Patricia Lykos. "We are taking the property back from the criminals. This is notice to the Bloods and the Crips and all the other gangs that we are going after them."

Lykos filed the action as part of a broad, long-term initiative to dismantle gangs and their malignant influence in Harris County. The legal action enables criminal prosecution for gang members who enter the protected area or otherwise violate the terms of the order.

Of the 47 listed defendants, 28 voluntarily agreed to the terms of the injunction. The other 19 were ordered to comply under the court orders issued today. The judge also ordered the remaining defendants to pay more than \$70,000 in attorney fees to the state.

Evidence in the morning hearing showed that law enforcement officers received more than 3,000 calls last year for police help regarding crimes that were related to gang activity.

The permanent injunction follows a temporary injunction issued by Judge Smoots-Hogan last Dec. 10. District Attorney Lykos, in cooperation with officers from the Harris County Sheriff's Department and the Houston Police Department, community organizations and the Haverstock Hills management, began more than a year ago to coordinate a project to upgrade services and security in that area.

Court action to gain the injunction was led by Special Prosecutor Kim Ogg and Joni Vollman, Chief of the District Attorney's Special Prosecutions Bureau. (end)

