

# NEWS RELEASE



**Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr.**  
**California Department of Justice**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 6, 2007

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## Vicious Gang Taken Down

STOCKTON -- June 6 (2007) California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. announced today a "major take down" of key leaders of the Loc Town Crips (LTC), a Stockton-based Cambodian street gang responsible for extensive drug and gun trafficking in California and throughout the country.

The attorney general's investigation, which began last December, uncovered widespread violence and drug dealing, including drive-by shootings and sales of methamphetamine, ecstasy and marijuana in California, North Carolina, Ohio, Philadelphia and Rhode Island. Gang members arrested Wednesday were charged with multiple weapons and drug offenses.

"The Loc Town Crips terrorized Stockton neighborhoods and operated a virtual underground business, using the Internet, text messaging and FedEx to complete their deals," Brown said. "Today's major take down ends the reign of one of the most sophisticated and vicious gangs operating in California today."

In the last six months, the gang participated in at least four drive-by shootings in the Stockton area alone. One gang member has already been arrested for homicide. LTC gang members posted photos of themselves flashing letter "L" gang signs on MySpace.com. Some of their aliases include "Looney," "Joker" and "Grouch." The gang also posted rap music touting their criminal behavior on various Web sites. The Loc Town Crips have a history of arrests and convictions for assault, robbery, residential robbery and murder. They are believed to have participated in dozens of drive by shootings in Stockton alone.

LTC has approximately 100 members in the Stockton area. Some gang members speak both English and Khmer. They identify with the color blue and the label LTC. One of their primary operation areas, dubbed "Oak Park," is an apartment complex located at 3830 N. Alvarado Street. Gang members commonly claim "Oak Park" when identifying their gang.

The Loc Town Crips ran drugs in and out of California to pay for weapons which they used in drive by-shootings targeting rival gangs. The gang used commercial package services, including FedEx, DHL and UPS to transport drugs, cash and weapons as top gang members organized transactions with out-of-state associates via text messaging. The commercial carriers cooperated with law enforcement during the investigation. Top gang members also used text messages to plot violent acts including drive-by shootings of rivals.

The arrests, the largest California gang crackdown this year, were coordinated by the California Department of Justice Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement Gang Suppression Enforcement Team, the San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office, the Stockton Police Department, the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office, the San Joaquin County Probation Department, the Lodi Police Department, the Manteca Police Department, the

Tracy Police Department, the Stockton Unified School District Police, and the Sacramento Police Department.

San Joaquin County Deputy District Attorney Tori Verber said that during the past two years, Asian gang members accounted for half of the local gang prosecutions, including assaults, drive-by shootings, and a murder within the Stockton area.

“In order to combat the fear and violence that results from gangs that exist throughout our communities, partnerships with various local, state and federal law enforcement agencies must continue and expand,” said Stockton Police Department Chief Wayne Hose. “No agency can do it alone. The Stockton Police Department appreciates the help, both in resources and manpower that we have received in this recent anti-gang operation and in the past. We look forward to a continued close working relationship with the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement and all the other agencies involved.”

Since the California Department of Justice agents began their investigation in December 2006, agents seized methamphetamine, weapons and \$50,000 in drug proceeds. Intelligence used included tracking gang graffiti, reviewing arrest statistics and interviewing gang members.

The attorney general's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement's Gang Suppression Enforcement Team consists of agents tasked with identifying, investigating and deterring gang-related violent crime. The agents are experts in conducting complex investigations needed to target and dismantle criminal street gangs. They assist local law enforcement agencies across the state in gathering intelligence and making cases and arrests against top-level gang members in a bid to disrupt their criminal enterprise.

There are nearly 500 Asian street gangs in California with the majority of them belonging to Vietnamese, Chinese/Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Mien gangs and are commonly referred to by law enforcement authorities as Southeast Asian gangs. The presence of Southeast Asian gangs in California began in the last 30 years after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Nearly all of their gang-related characteristics were adopted from existing street gangs and personalized for each of their respective gangs such as claiming colors, throwing hand signs and their way of walk, talk and dress.

See attached fact sheet for additional information.

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## **FACT SHEET: Gang Suppression Enforcement Teams (GSET)**

The Department of Justice created the Gang Suppression Enforcement Team (GSET) within the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement in 2006 as a response to the street gangs that perpetrate violent crimes. The objective is to eradicate criminal street gang activity by extracting and terminating the gang's criminal hierarchy. GSET coordinates statewide investigations of gangs and gang members who often travel outside county, city and state jurisdictions in order to conduct illegal business.

### **Gangs in California**

Gang membership estimates in California range from 250,000 to 420,000 members. Of all California homicides between 1996 and 2005, roughly 27 percent were gang related. Gang population crosses all socio-economic, ethnic and racial boundaries. Members are being recruited at young ages. Gangs engage in a multitude of criminal activity with drug trafficking being the most lucrative criminal enterprise.

### **GSET Response**

There are GSET teams in Los Angeles, Riverside, San Francisco and Fresno. GSET deploys investigative teams which target, investigate, arrest and prosecute gangs involved in violent crimes. Agents utilize the California Street Terrorism Enforcement Prevention Act to maximize arrests and maximize sentences for violent crimes. Wiretap technology allows GSET teams to gather substantive evidence and key intelligence. The goal is to disrupt the organizational flow of gangs and create a terror-free environment for the citizens of California. The GSET actions include:

- Identifying top co-conspirators and ultimately dismantling the organization's leadership
- Seizing violent street gang assets
- Gathering intelligence and sharing analysis with law enforcement agencies
- Providing expert electronic surveillance support
- Supporting local prosecutors after investigations are terminated.