

TEXAS GANG THREAT ASSESSMENT



JULY
2017



Texas Gang Threat Assessment

A State Intelligence Estimate

Produced by the Texas Joint Crime Information Center
Intelligence & Counterterrorism Division
Texas Department of Public Safety

In collaboration with federal, state, and local law enforcement and criminal justice agencies

July 2017

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(U) Executive Summary

(U) The key analytic judgments of this assessment are:

- **(U) Gangs remain a significant threat to public safety in Texas.** Gangs in Texas continue their involvement in organized criminal activity throughout the state, committing violence and maintaining relationships with dangerous Transnational Criminal Organizations. We assess that as many as 100,000 gang members are in Texas.
- **(U) The most significant gangs in Texas are Tango Blast and associated Tango cliques (estimated >19,000 members), Latin Kings (estimated >1,300 members), Texas Mexican Mafia (estimated >4,100 members), and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) (estimated >500 members).** These Tier 1 gangs pose the greatest gang threat potential based on their cartel relationships, high levels of transnational criminal activity, level of committed violence, and overall statewide strength and presence.
- **(U) Violence is often inseparable from gang activity.** Whether protecting criminal assets and territory, carrying out contractual obligations, initiating new members, or targeting other members, gang member violence places Texas citizens in harm's way. More than half of all tier-ranked gang members incarcerated within Texas Department of Criminal Justice prisons are serving sentences for violent crimes, including robbery (23 percent), homicide (16 percent), assaultive offenses (14 percent), and sexual assault (6 percent).
- **(U) Cartel and gang relationships remain steady.** Mexican cartels and Texas gangs work together to distribute drugs throughout the state, smuggle illegal aliens across the border, and procure and move weapons to Mexico. Cartels sometimes reach out to gang members to commit violent crimes on both sides of the border. The relationships between certain gangs and cartels fluctuate based on cartel structures and cell alignments, gang alignment with specific cartels, threats or coercion, and familial ties. As long as illicit cross-border crimes are profitable, the relationship between cartels and gangs will continue.
- **(U) Partnerships between gangs continue across the state.** Law enforcement reporting throughout Texas shows members of different, and sometimes opposing, gangs will work together to fulfill common criminal objectives. These collaborations are frequently a result of familial and neighborhood ties, hybrid gang memberships, and temporary mutually beneficial agreements. In addition, some violent rivalries remain in place in Texas, mostly between street gangs in concentrated areas, such as the Texas Chicano Brotherhood and Tri-City Bombers in the Rio Grande Valley. Other examples include the rivalry between the Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang and Cossacks Motorcycle Club, which contributed to the May 2015 shooting in Waco that killed nine people. Their conflicts can result in the injury or death of innocent citizens, particularly during violent altercations in public, such as drive-by shootings.
- **(U) Gang members actively use social media to communicate, boast, and recruit.** The popularity of social media has not been lost on gang members, especially with younger generations. Gangs use social networking and video-sharing websites as platforms to brag, recruit, and antagonize rival gang members, while mobile messaging applications are used by gang members to communicate. These include encrypted messaging platforms whose use by gang members challenges law enforcement agencies' ability to investigate and collect criminal intelligence information.

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(U) Table of Contents

(U) Title Page.....	1
(U) Executive Summary	3
(U) Table of Contents	5
(U) Acknowledgments	7
(U) State Intelligence Estimates.....	9
(U) Preface.....	11
(U) Introduction	13
(U) Prioritization and Criteria.....	15
(U) Law Enforcement Strategies.....	21
(U) Regional Assessments	25
(U) Gang Organization	29
(U) Gang Relationships.....	31
(U) Gang Involvement in Criminal Activity.....	33
(U) Outlook.....	35
(U) Appendix 1: Overview of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Gangs.....	37
(U) Appendix 2: Other Contributing Agencies.....	53
(U) References	61

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(U) Acknowledgments

(U) The Texas Joint Crime Information Center collaborated with law enforcement and criminal justice agencies across Texas and the United States in the production of this State Intelligence Estimate. Their contributions were invaluable in developing a comprehensive assessment of the threat posed by gangs in Texas, and they underscore the commitment among law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in Texas to share information and intelligence in order to effectively combat crime and improve public safety. The Joint Crime Information Center thanks these agencies and centers for contributing to the production of this assessment.

(U) It is also important to acknowledge the essential contributions of the many law enforcement agencies throughout Texas that routinely report gang and border-related incidents, which also contributed to this report. This includes Operation Border Star participants and agencies that contribute information to the Texas Gang Investigative Database (TxGang). Contributing agencies are listed in Appendix 2.

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(U) State Intelligence Estimates

(U) In order to enhance the state's ability to detect, assess, and prioritize threats to the safety and security of its citizens, the Texas Department of Public Safety implemented a State Intelligence Estimate process after consultation with the National Intelligence Council, based in part on the model of the National Intelligence Estimate.

(U) State Intelligence Estimates are multi-agency assessments on issues relating to homeland security and public safety in Texas. They serve as the most authoritative and comprehensive analysis of these issues, and they are designed to provide law enforcement and government officials with the most accurate evaluation of current information on a given topic. State Intelligence Estimates are intended to provide an assessment on the status of an issue, but they may also include estimative conclusions that make forecasts about future developments and identify the implications for Texas.

(U) Unlike reports and assessments produced by an individual agency or center, State Intelligence Estimates draw on the information and expertise of multiple law enforcement and homeland security agencies across Texas. Such an approach is essential to developing a comprehensive assessment of issues that affect the state as a whole. By incorporating the perspectives and information from multiple agencies, the Texas Department of Public Safety is better able to produce assessments that support the development of proactive strategies and policies needed to address current and evolving threats to the state.

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(U) Preface

(U) This threat assessment is submitted to the Governor and Legislature of Texas in response to the requirements of Texas Government Code §421.082. In addition to meeting these requirements, this threat assessment provides a broad overview of *criminal gang* activity throughout the state of Texas.

(U) Texas Penal Code §71.01 defines a *criminal gang* as three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

(U) This assessment was produced by the Texas Joint Crime Information Center in the form of a State Intelligence Estimate. It includes the contributions of a wide range of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in the state.

(U) The statements, conclusions, and assessments included in this report were reached based on a review and analysis of information from a variety of sources, including federal, state, and local reports of varying degrees of sensitivity and reliability, and open-source reporting.

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(U) Introduction

(U) This assessment updates the findings of the Texas Public Safety Threat Overview and the previous Texas Gang Threat Assessment, and following these publications serves as the annual evaluation of the gang threat in Texas. Most of the data and information contained within this assessment covers events occurring within calendar years 2015 and 2016. While many of the underlying trends and characteristics of gang activity have not changed substantially since the last assessment, this report includes relevant updates and detailed information on several key aspects of gang activity.

(U) The purpose of this assessment is to identify and evaluate the threat posed by gangs and gang-related crime in Texas by examining several key aspects of gang activity. The first section of this report explains the criteria and factors the Joint Crime Information Center uses to assess the threat posed by an individual gang. The subsequent sections examine law enforcement strategies in targeting gangs, gang activity in various regions of the state, gang organizational issues, gang relationships, and an analysis of gang involvement in criminal activity. As a final point, this assessment presents an outlook of gang activity in Texas.

(U) Quantitative information regarding gangs and gang activity is somewhat limited, and the data available is not necessarily comprehensive. For example, the number of gang members in Texas is dynamic, with gangs regularly seeking new recruits, and existing members traveling or moving. Law enforcement agencies may vary in their reporting, as well as in their awareness of gangs and indicators of gang activity. Furthermore, not all gang members are known to law enforcement, making the available information on identified gangs and gang members representative of only a portion of all gang activity.

(U) Some law enforcement and criminal justice agencies currently maintain gang intelligence information in separate databases, several of which are not interoperable, creating impediments to the sharing of gang-related criminal intelligence information. Based on the requirements of Chapter 61 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, the Texas Department of Public Safety created an online catalog to encourage and expedite the exchange of gang intelligence information between criminal justice agencies. The Texas Gang Investigative Database, or TxGang, is an online intelligence database available for all levels of law enforcement to track gang members. Any local, state, or federal law enforcement agency engaging in the administration of criminal justice is permitted to use TxGang. The Department continues to work with its law enforcement partners to increase the level of participation. For more information on TxGang, visit www.dps.texas.gov/txgangs.

(U) Despite the above-mentioned limitations, the available quantitative information, combined with intelligence and information derived from investigations and multiple others sources, provides a reliable overview of gang activity in Texas.

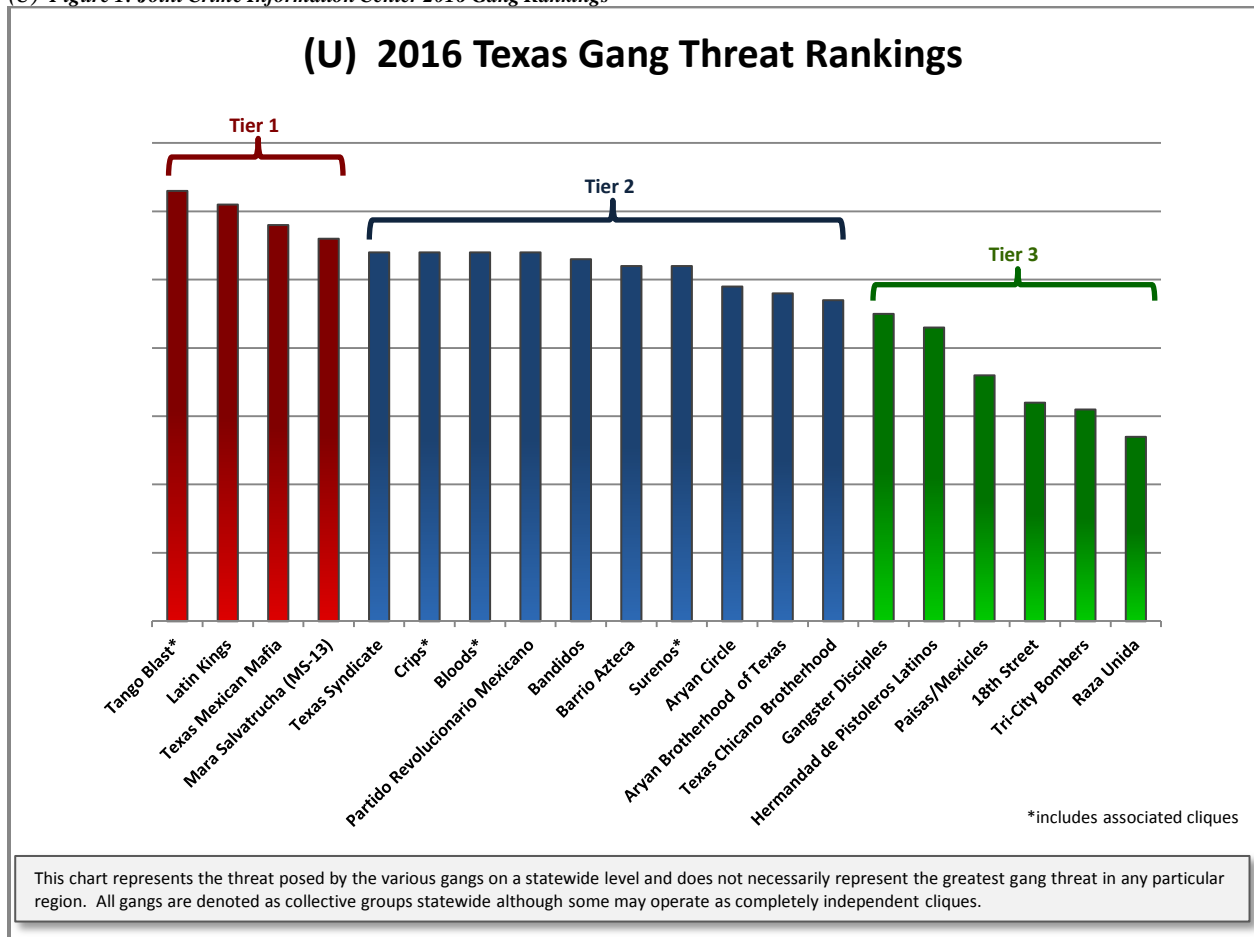
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(U) Prioritization and Criteria

(U) The Texas Joint Crime Information Center uses a threat assessment matrix to compare and evaluate the threat posed by individual gangs at a statewide level. This matrix consists of 11 factors used in determining each identified gang’s threat potential. The factors are rated using a weighted, point-based system to achieve a composite score. This score provides a measurement of the overall threat level of each gang. Gangs with the highest scores are deemed the most significant and are classified as Tier 1, with other significant gangs classified as Tier 2 and Tier 3. Considering thousands of gangs are identified in Texas, this threat assessment matrix is a necessary tool in prioritizing which gangs pose the greatest threat on a statewide scale.

(U) The rankings in *Figure 1* (below) show the threat posed by these gangs to the state as a whole. The gangs evaluated as the greatest threat at the statewide level do not necessarily pose the greatest threat in every community. Similarly, the gangs that pose the greatest threat in one particular community may be local and not active elsewhere. Some of the gangs listed in *Figure 1* are composed of multiple sets and cliques that adhere to a common culture and identity, though the individual cliques may operate autonomously. The threat posed by any particular gang is often dynamic, and a threat assessment tool such as this is designed to be fluid.

(U) *Figure 1: Joint Crime Information Center 2016 Gang Rankings*

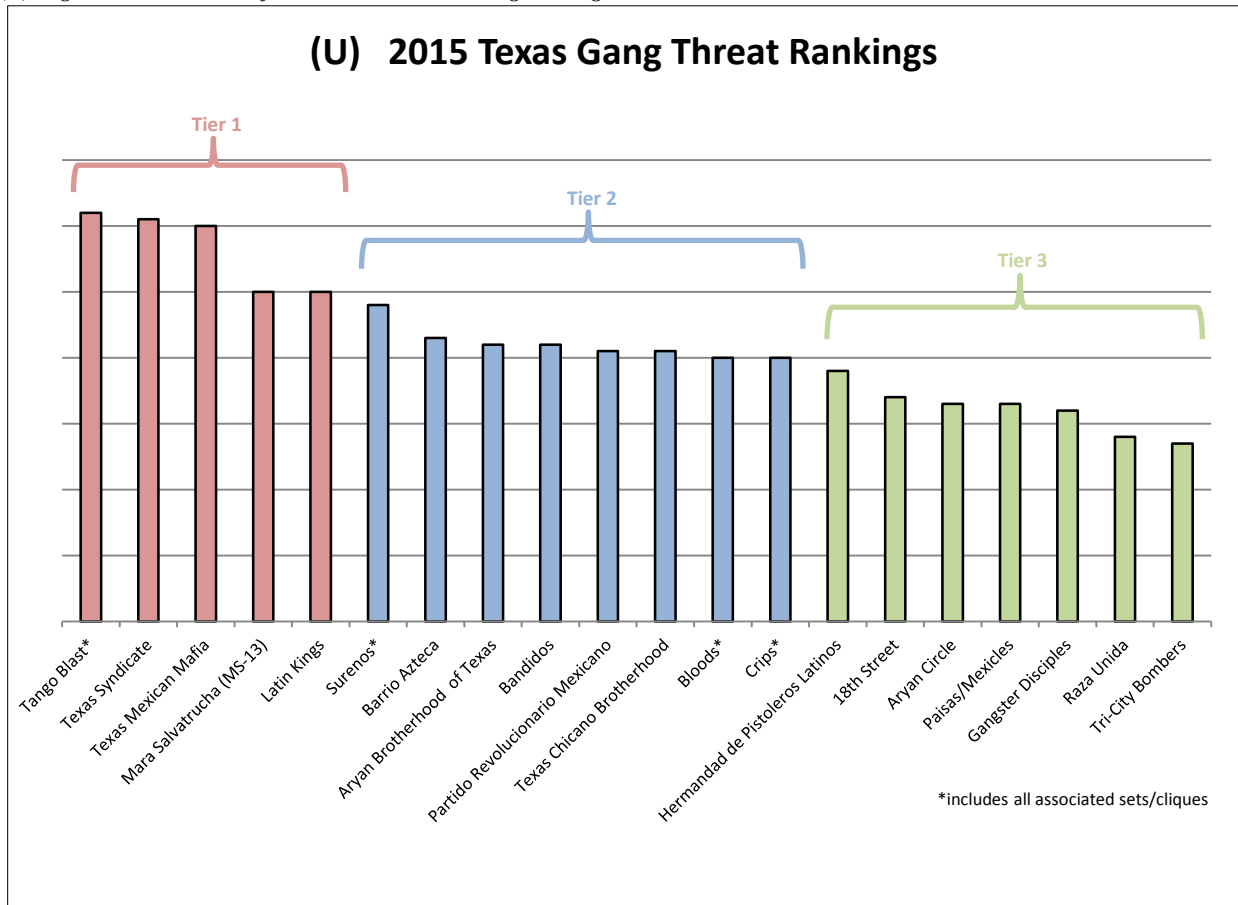


(U) The factors included in the Joint Crime Information Center 2016 threat assessment matrix include:

- **(U) Relationship with Cartels:** Examines the degree to which a gang is connected to Mexico-based drug cartels. Gangs are assessed as having no or limited relationships, relationships based on third-party contacts, or as having direct contacts.
- **(U) Transnational Criminal Activity:** Considers whether a gang has transnational criminal connections, as well as whether a gang's criminal activity has spread into transnational territory.
- **(U) Level of Criminal Activity:** Rates the type and frequency of crimes perpetrated by the gang. Crimes are rated on a scale covering a range of offenses, from misdemeanors to various levels of felonies.
- **(U) Level of Violence:** Assesses the overall level of violence perpetrated by the gang in its criminal activity. It ranges from generally non-violent offenses, such as money laundering, to crimes involving extreme violence, such as torture and murder.
- **(U) Prevalence throughout Texas:** Determines the extent to which a gang is active throughout the state. The geographic reach of some gangs is limited to specific cities or regions of Texas, while others are widespread across the state.
- **(U) Relationship with Other Gangs:** Examines the nature of a gang's alliances and influence with other gangs. This may involve limited and temporary contacts, formal alliances, or the direct oversight of some gangs by others.
- **(U) Total Strength:** Assesses the known size of the gang, measured by the number of individuals confirmed by law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. This number is usually an underrepresentation of the true size of the gang since many members are unknown to law enforcement.
- **(U) Statewide Organizational Effectiveness:** Examines the gang's effectiveness in organizing members under its leadership across the state.
- **(U) Juvenile Membership:** Considers the extent to which the gang recruits juveniles and is active in schools, as recruitment of minors is a unique threat.
- **(U) Threat to Law Enforcement:** Considers the extent to which the gang represents a threat to law enforcement. Some gang members may only use violence to resist arrest or to flee from law enforcement, while others may actively target officers.
- **(U) Involvement in Human Smuggling and Trafficking:** Examines the gang's involvement in human smuggling and human trafficking activities, including the sex trafficking of juveniles.

(U) In order to provide the most accurate assessment of the threat posed by gangs in the state, the Joint Crime Information Center monitors gang-related information and updates the rankings on at least an annual basis. The 2016 rankings in *Figure 1* reflect changes from the previous gang rankings, shown in *Figure 2* (next page).

(U) Figure 2: Joint Crime Information Center 2015 Gang Rankings



(U) While some gangs received similar rankings over the past year, the evaluation of gangs is ongoing and will evolve over time as law enforcement works to reduce their effectiveness. The most noteworthy highlights regarding the current gang rankings include:

- (U) **Tango Blast** and associated **Tango cliques**, **Latin Kings**, **Texas Mexican Mafia**, and **Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)** remain Tier 1 gangs in Texas. These four gangs continue to pose the greatest gang threat to Texas due to their relationships with Mexican cartels, consistent transnational criminal activity, statewide presence, and a high propensity for violence, among other significant factors.
- (U) This marks the first year **Texas Syndicate** ranks as a Tier 2 threat, after previously ranking Tier 1 since 2010. Contributing factors to their downgrade include recent law enforcement investigations severely disrupting the gang, as well as the role Tango Blast and associated Tango cliques have played in diminishing their power within and outside of prison.
- (U) **Tango Blast** and associated **Tango cliques** remain as the greatest statewide gang threat. The gang, with their lax membership structure, continues to grow largely unrestricted both inside and outside the Texas prison system. When combined, Tango Blast and Tango cliques have the largest membership levels in Texas, and even individual cliques are outnumbering most gangs. Tango members engage in a variety of crimes across the state, including transnational crimes along the Mexico border.

- (U) The threat from **Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)** has continued from the previous year, solidifying their Tier 1 ranking status. MS-13 remains the most encountered gang illegally crossing the Texas-Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley, though the number has decreased slightly since the border influx of illegal aliens in 2014. Although law enforcement actions in Houston and Dallas have had an impact on the gang's activities in those cities, the threat of this violent gang still causes concern for public safety.
- (U) Despite a major operation dismantling the **Latin Kings** in Central Texas, the gang sustains a Tier 1 ranking in 2016. The Latin Kings have a significant presence in many suburban and rural areas of Texas, enabling them to engage in the illicit drug market and other criminal activity. Of major concern is their direct connection with the violent Chicago-based Latin Kings, who provide the gang with unique advantages, such as resources and structure, not afforded to most other Texas gangs.
- (U) Several law enforcement investigations involving the **Aryan Circle** confirm the gang's active criminal prevalence and operations throughout the state. Their criminal activity, along with documentation of associating with Mexican cartels, increases the gang's ranking from Tier 3 to Tier 2.
- (U) **Bloods, Crips, Partido Revolucionario Mexicano, Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang, Barrio Azteca, Sureños, Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, and Texas Chicano Brotherhood** all remain Tier 2 gangs this year. Although these gangs vary in size and structure, they are responsible for gang crime across urban, suburban, and rural areas of Texas. Large-scale investigations into the Barrio Azteca in El Paso and Aryan Brotherhood of Texas in the Dallas-Fort Worth area resulted in dozens of arrests, including high ranking members.

(U) Gang Threats to Law Enforcement

(U) According to data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, the overall number of law enforcement fatalities has steadily increased, along with the severity of threats, since 2011.¹ In Texas, there have been several significant threats to law enforcement from criminal actors with varying motivations, including the execution-style shooting death of a Harris County Sheriff's Deputy in August 2015, and the sniper ambush deaths of five Dallas area police officers during an organized protest in July 2016.^{2,3}

(U) Gang members nationwide have long posed a threat to law enforcement, most often in the form of assaulting officers as they attempt to evade or resist arrest. More concerning are cases in which gangs and gang members actively target officers, such as in retaliation for officer-involved shootings, investigations, raids, or arrests of gang members. Members of multiple gangs have been associated with threats toward law enforcement, ranging from social media posts to plotting ambushes. Open source reporting suggests that gang hostility toward law enforcement may be generated by younger gang members, while older gang members are allegedly attempting to discourage the activity.

(U) Gang members in Texas and other states have used social media to make threats and incite violence toward law enforcement, often in the wake of officer-involved shootings. Recent statements include killing any police officer who tries to make an arrest, killing officers for being liars or targeting certain ethnicities, killing police in retaliation for police-involved shootings, and targeting law enforcement to overthrow the government. Some social media posts have indicated that "crew" members receive their "marching orders" via social media, and several hashtags have been linked in varying intensity to encourage retaliation against law enforcement, including #ShootThePolice, #BlueLivesDontMatter, and #MoreDeadCops, with many more containing violent and explicit language.

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(U) Law Enforcement Strategies

(U) Organized crime in Texas often occurs across multi-jurisdictional areas, and requires a unified law enforcement approach to affect the most problematic gangs. Such organized crime throughout the state can be reduced using proven strategies that dismantle the command and control networks of those criminal organizations that most threaten public safety in Texas. Effectively reducing this threat requires the employment of a variety of initiatives that harness the various capabilities of local, state, and federal law enforcement, as well as both state and federal prosecutors. Combining intelligence, patrol, investigative, and prosecutorial resources is essential for any strategy to be effective. Working together from the onset of these investigations, investigators and prosecutors must continue to utilize all available state and federal statutes that aid in the successful prosecution of senior and mid-level leadership.

(U) One successful and effective approach to this law enforcement strategy is the creation of regional Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) centers. Named as a main priority of the Governor of Texas' "Securing Texas Plan," this approach integrates agencies across jurisdictions by staffing multi-agency gang investigators and analysts into shared facilities for collaborative gang investigations. The partnerships among law enforcement and prosecutors at the local, state, and federal level are essential to fully disrupt and render ineffective the gangs that constitute the greatest threat to Texas. Using this approach, law enforcement agencies in Texas have successfully collaborated during the past year in multiple investigations designed to disrupt and deter gang-related criminal activity. There are currently three TAG centers in operation (Hidalgo County, Houston, and North Texas), with future centers underway in El Paso and San Antonio.

(U) The Texas Violent Gang Task Force (TVGTF) has long contributed to the success of gang investigations and intelligence sharing around the state by promoting interagency collaboration with the common goals of prevention, intervention, suppression, and prosecution of gangs. The TVGTF Gang Training Initiative, grant funded through the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office, enabled the Office of the Attorney General to work with the TVGTF to provide regional gang training to underserved areas within the state. From 2014-2017, grants enabled the TVGTF to provide 21 tuition-free gang trainings, benefitting close to 3,000 criminal and juvenile justice agency personnel representing over 900 agencies in multiple counties throughout Texas. Working in conjunction with the established TAG centers, the \$115,000 in grant funds for 2017-2018 will be used to facilitate gang intelligence sharing meetings in the six TVGTF regions and two advanced, specialized trainings relevant to gang issues in Texas.

(U) Below are several examples of successful anti-gang operations and investigations that involved the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and other agencies.

- (U) In late 2016, DPS Criminal Investigations Division (CID) Special Agents concluded an investigation targeting members and associates of the **Partido Revolucionario Mexicano** (PRM) gang operating in San Antonio. The PRM organization is responsible for the distribution of narcotics, murder and assaults in the San Antonio area. Employing a variety of investigative tools and strategies, law enforcement partners have identified and targeted approximately 25 members and associates of the organization; to include middle and senior level members of the hierarchy. As a result of the investigative efforts, four PRM members were arrested; nine firearms and \$19,900 were seized, along with 69.4 ounces of methamphetamine, 30 grams of cocaine, and 205 grams of marijuana.
- (U) In November 2016, DPS CID Special Agents conducted a warrant round-up operation resulting in the arrests of six individuals who were charged with Engaging in Criminal Activity/Manufacture or Deliver a Controlled Substance in Penalty Group 1, 4-200 grams, a

Felony of the First Degree. Of the six subjects arrested, two were identified as Raza Unida gang members, one was identified as a suspected **Raza Unida** gang member, and one subject was identified as an associate of the **Latin Kings**. Special Agents seized approximately two pounds of methamphetamine, one pound of cocaine, one pound of marijuana, and 15 weapons. Additional law enforcement agencies assisting in the operation were Bryan Police Department, College Station Police Department, Texas Department of Criminal Justice Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Texas Highway Patrol.

- (U) In August 2016, DPS CID Special Agents conducted a multijurisdictional investigation targeting members and associates of the **Texas Mexican Mafia** (TMM) with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies spanning from Corpus Christi to Houston, simultaneously executing 19 arrest warrants and three evidentiary search warrants. Eighteen individuals, including 10 confirmed TMM members, and eight associate members were arrested, resulting in the seizure of 35.3 grams of marijuana, four grams of heroin, one .9mm Ruger semi-automatic handgun and TMM paraphernalia. The subjects arrested were charged with Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Cocaine; Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Methamphetamine; Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Heroin, and Conspiracy to Violate the RICO statute.
- (U) In June 2016, DPS CID Lubbock partnered with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Big Spring Police Department, Ector County Sheriff's Office, Lubbock Police Department and Lubbock County Sheriff's Office as part of a multi-agency investigation and arrested nine subjects, including four members of the **Texas Syndicate** who were arrested on federal charges stemming from their roles in a methamphetamine, cocaine and marijuana distribution conspiracy. As a result of the operation, approximately 224 grams of methamphetamine, five weapons and \$41,198 were seized. In total, the investigation resulted in the seizure of 17.281 lbs. of methamphetamine, .12 lbs. of cocaine, 1.4 lbs. of marijuana, 14 firearms, and the arrest of seven senior/mid-level defendants and 19 street level defendants.
- (U) In May 2016, DPS CID Special Agents served arrest warrants on 18 defendants for the offenses of Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity and Manufacture/Distribution of a Penalty Group 1 Controlled Substance, stemming from an 18-month investigation involving members of the **West Texas Tangos**, **Surenos** and **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas** (ABT) gangs, who were responsible for distributing methamphetamine in Lamb, Hockley, Lubbock and Potter counties. In early 2017, two defendants pled guilty and were sentenced to 17 years and 20 years confinement within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The remaining defendants are awaiting sentencing.
- (U) In May 2016, DPS CID Special Agents along with personnel from the Midland Police Department, Odessa Police Department, Ector County Sheriff's Office, Midland County Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Marshal's Service, and DEA, conducted a warrant arrest operation resulting in the arrest of several members of the **La Familia Motorcycle Club**. As a result of the investigation, 10 search warrants were executed resulting in the seizure of 10 weapons, seven vehicles/motorcycles, approximately six pounds of cocaine, one pound of marijuana, and \$192,400. In December 2016, nine of the defendants were sentenced in federal court and received sentences ranging from 33 months to 151 months in federal prison.
- (U) From 2012 to 2016, Texas DPS Special Agents in El Paso, along with United States Marshal Service, Homeland Security Investigations/ Border Enforcement Security Task Force, Drug Enforcement Administration/ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), FBI Safe Streets

Task Force, Socorro Police Department, El Paso Police Department, El Paso County Sheriff's Office and members of the 34th District Attorney's Office conducted a joint investigation into the criminal activities of members of the **Barrio Azteca** prison gang. In January 2016, law enforcement personnel executed a warrant roundup and successfully arrested 21 defendants. Agents also executed one search warrant at a residence in El Paso and conducted eight consent searches at residences in El Paso and Socorro, Texas. As a result of the searches, agents seized approximately 2.6 grams of heroin, 27.2 grams of marijuana, 4.8 grams of Hydrocodone, and approximately four grams of Acetaminophen/Codeine. Defendants were arrested on multiple felony charges to include Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity to Manufacture/Distribute Controlled Substance PG-1 (Heroin and Cocaine), Manufacture/Distribute Controlled Substance PG-1 (Heroin) and Conspiracy to Manufacture/Distribute Controlled Substance PG-1 (Heroin). Six additional defendants were already in state custody and were pending additional felony charges for Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity to Manufacture/Distribute Controlled Substance PG-1 (Heroin), Manufacture/Distribute Controlled Substance PG-1 (Heroin) and Conspiracy to Manufacture/Distribute Controlled Substance PG-1 (Heroin).

- (U) In December 2015, a federal judge sentenced 29 Uvalde/Hondo- area **Texas Syndicate** members to federal prison for various racketeering and drug trafficking offenses committed in Uvalde, San Antonio, and surrounding areas. Four Texas Syndicate members were each sentenced to life in federal prison for Conspiracy to Violate the RICO statute. During the trial of one of the Texas Syndicate gang members, evidence presented revealed that the gang member, along with 14 other Texas Syndicate members and associates, conspired since 2002 to commit three murders and distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine, 100 kilograms of marijuana and three ounces of methamphetamine. A jury also found one of the Texas Syndicate gang members guilty of Conspiracy to Commit Murder in Aid of Racketeering and Murder in Aid of Racketeering for a murder that occurred in October 2002, in Uvalde. The victim was murdered for failing to follow Texas Syndicate rules. In addition to the RICO defendants, 15 other Texas Syndicate members and associates were sentenced to federal prison for their roles in a drug trafficking enterprise being sentenced to 240 to 300 months' imprisonment after a jury convicted them of Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Cocaine. The case resulted from a joint investigation by the FBI and Texas DPS, San Antonio Police Department, Medina County Sheriff's Office, and the Bandera County Sheriff's Office. Also assisting in the investigation was the 38th Judicial District Adult Probation Gang Unit, TDCJ, United States Attorney's Office, and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. The United States Marshal Service, ICE, and the Uvalde County Sheriff's Department assisted in making the arrests.
- (U) In November 2015, Texas DPS Special Agents in Garland continued a joint investigation into the organized criminal activities of the **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas** and **Aryan Circle**. Fifty-four defendants related to the investigation were indicted on federal drug charges. Following the indictments, and with the assistance of personnel from the United States Marshal Service, Dallas Police Department, Mesquite Police Department, and the Garland Police Department, a series of arrest warrants were executed resulting in the seizure of 10.8 kilograms of methamphetamine, 56 grams of heroin, 17 firearms, and two stolen vehicles. Over the course of the investigation, 91 arrests were made resulting in 91 indictments. In late 2016, all defendants indicted in the investigation were convicted and sentenced.
- (U) In August 2015, Texas DPS Special Agents in the Austin, San Antonio, and San Marcos areas, conducted an arrest and search warrant operation involving **Texas Mexican Mafia** (TMM) gang members in the Central Texas area. Other agencies involved in the operation included the FBI, Austin Police Department, Hays County Narcotics Task Force and the TDCJ – Office of Inspector General. Two federal search warrants and three consent searches were executed

resulting in the seizure of narcotics, firearms, currency, and vehicles. Six arrests were made, including that of four high-ranking TMM gang members wanted for Possession with Intent to Distribute Controlled Substances and Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Controlled Substances. An additional federal search warrant executed resulted in the seizure of an additional three firearms, marijuana, and cocaine. A source of supply for the TMM was arrested at the Eagle Pass Border Patrol Checkpoint for Possession with Intent to Distribute Controlled Substances and Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Controlled Substances. In early 2016, five of the defendants were sentenced to federal prison with sentences ranging from 248 months to 349 months. The remaining defendant was sentenced in April 2016 to six months in federal prison and three years of supervised release. This successful operation essentially disrupted TMM operations in the Central Texas area by impeding their ability to carry out future criminal activities for many years to come.

- (U) In March 2015, Texas DPS Special Agents in Fort Worth, along with local and federal law enforcement agencies, initiated a joint investigation into the organized criminal activities of the **Aryan Circle, Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, Peckerwoods, and Tango Blast**. Fifty-two defendants related to the investigation were indicted on June 10, 2015. Search warrants were executed, resulting in the seizure of methamphetamine, heroin, Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB), Hydrocodone, marijuana and U.S. currency. In August 2015, a major within the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas was arrested as part of the investigation and was sentenced to 50 years in prison. Another member was sentenced to 25 years in federal prison in October 2015.
- (U) In January 2015, DPS Special Agents assigned to the Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) Center in Houston, in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Houston Police Department and the Pasadena Police Department, conducted an operation into the methamphetamine distribution activities of an **Aryan Circle** gang member. Law enforcement personnel conducted controlled purchases of methamphetamine and multiple traffic stops, which subsequently lead to the arrest of six suspects, one of whom was a documented Aryan Circle gang member. Approximately 247 grams of methamphetamine, 0.5 grams of cocaine, 1.7 grams of marijuana, 36 grams of Hydrocodone, and two firearms were also seized.

(U) Gang Violence in Harris County

(U) Harris County contains the highest concentration of identified and suspected gang activity in Texas. Nearly every DPS evaluated tiered threat gang in Texas has reported activity in Harris County, including all Tier 1 gangs. The most significant gangs in Harris County are the Houstone Tango Blast and various sets of Crips and Bloods, including the 52 Hoover Crips and the 59 Bounty Hunters Bloods. Harris County also contains the highest reported membership of MS-13. Houston-area officials identify several local gangs, such as Southwest Cholos, La Primera, and 5th Ward Circle, as also having a significant presence.

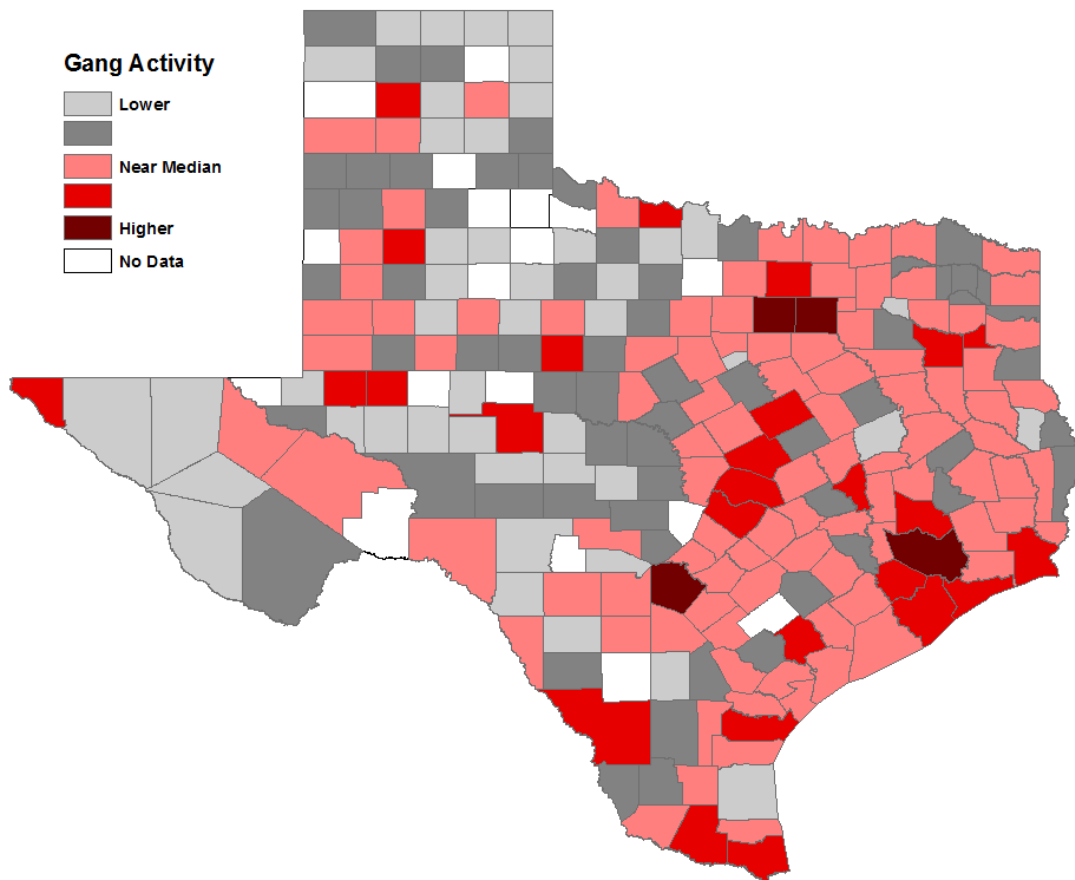
(U) As of December 31, 2016, gang members from Harris County accounted for 17% of the confirmed and suspected gang members incarcerated within the TDCJ prison system, making Harris County the top originating county for incarcerated gang offenders in the state. The next highest county was Dallas, representing 11% of the gang population. Among gang members incarcerated for violent crimes, Harris County gang offenders accounted for 18% of all gang incarcerations due to violent crimes, also more than any other county in Texas.

(U) Regional Assessments

(U) All ranked gangs identified within the gang threat assessment pose significant threats in the areas they operate. For example, when evaluating an individual gang’s criminal activity within a defined location, a statewide Tier 3 threat may be identified as the most significant threat within that specific area. In order to aid and inform law enforcement and government officials with the gang threat potential in their respective jurisdiction, we provide regional assessments, based upon Texas DPS defined boundaries (see *Figure 4*).

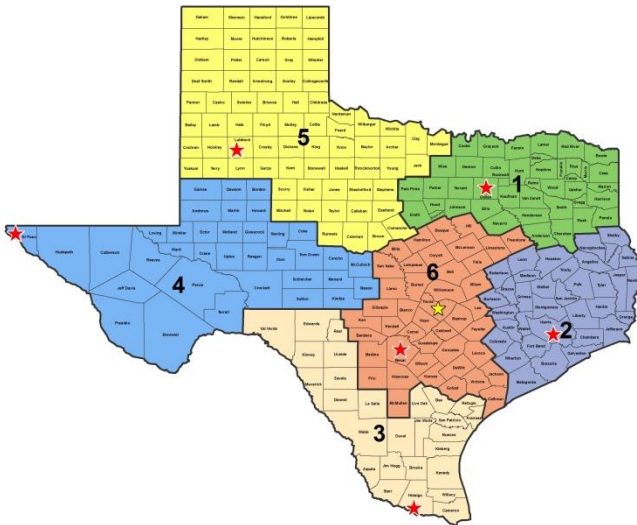
(U) Although there are challenges associated with quantitatively measuring gang membership and activity for the entire state of Texas, despite best efforts to identify gang members by Texas law enforcement agencies, we assess there are as many as 100,000 gang members in Texas at any given time when factoring in the state’s size, border location, and national transportation thoroughfare.

(U) *Figure 3: Concentration of Suspected Gang Activity in Texas*



(U) Gangs in Texas range from small groups composed of a few members with a limited geographic reach to large organizations with thousands of members active throughout multiple countries. Individual gang activity varies amongst Texas DPS defined regions. Some gangs only operate in limited areas of the state, while others are present across multiple Texas DPS regions. *Figure 3* (above) provides an overview of where suspected gang activity is concentrated.⁴

(U) *Figure 4: DPS Regional Boundaries*



(U) While the greatest concentrations of gang activity tend to be in the larger metropolitan areas, gang members are also found in surrounding suburban and rural areas. Gang activity is prevalent in the counties adjacent to Mexico since many Texas-based gangs are involved in cross-border smuggling and trafficking. Transnational gangs operating in Texas, such as Barrio Azteca and MS-13, engage in criminal activity in Mexico and elsewhere.

(U) As previously stated, not all significant gangs at the regional level are the most significant at the statewide level. For this reason, a gang’s prevalence throughout Texas is only one of the

factors used to assess its overall threat. Additionally, law enforcement agencies continue to investigate significant gangs, completing successful operations resulting in the arrest and prosecution of high-level gang leaders and members. These efforts may result in changes to the most significant gangs by region during the next assessment period.

(U) The following regional summaries provide an assessment of the most significant gangs operating in each of the six Texas DPS regions of Texas. Available gang data was analyzed to evaluate gang presence and activity in each region. Data sources include local and federal law enforcement agencies, as reported in TxGang, TDCJ, Texas DPS Criminal Investigations Division, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. A detailed list of the agencies can be found in Appendix 2.

(U) *DPS Region One*

(U) Region One’s most significant gangs for 2016 are **Tango Blast** of Dallas (D-Town) and Fort Worth (Foros/Foritos), **Sureños** (all sets), **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**, **Bloods** (all sets), and **Crips** (all sets).

(U) The largest and most active street gangs in Region One include **Sureños** (all sets), **Crips** (all sets), **Bloods** (all sets), and **Latin Kings**. The largest and most active prison gangs are the Dallas and Fort Worth cliques of **Tango Blast**, **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**, and **Aryan Circle**. The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas and Aryan Circle maintain a strong presence east of Dallas in the Garland and Mesquite areas, while the Latin Kings have been increasingly active in northern Fort Worth and Denton. Law enforcement agencies around the region also report a significant presence of **Gangster Disciples**, **MS-13**, and **Texas Syndicate**. Officials in the Dallas-Fort Worth area note the presence of local gangs like the **Eastside Homeboys** and **Varrío Northside**.

(U) Among all convicted tier-ranked gang members entering into the TDCJ prison system during CY2016, approximately 24 percent came from counties located in Region One, the same percent as CY2015. Tango members represented nearly 32 percent of those convicted, with the Crips accounting for 21 percent.

(U) *DPS Region Two*

(U) Region Two's most significant gangs for 2016 are **Tango Blast** of Houston (Houstone), **Bloods** (all sets), **Crips** (all sets), and **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**.

(U) The largest and most active street gangs in Region Two are **Crips** (all sets), **Bloods** (all sets), **Gangster Disciples**, **Sureños** (all sets), **Latin Kings**, and **MS-13**. The largest and most active prison gangs are **Tango Blast** (Houstone), **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**, **Aryan Circle**, and **Texas Syndicate**. The Latin Kings are especially active in the College Station-Bryan area. The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas maintains an active presence in the southeast counties of Jefferson, Orange, and Hardin. Other gangs in the region include **Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang**, **TMM**, and **Paisas/Mexicles**. Houston-area officials identify several local gangs, such as **Southwest Cholos** and **La Primera**, as having a significant presence.

(U) Among all convicted tier-ranked gang members entering into TDCJ during CY2016, approximately 30 percent came from counties located in Region Two, an increase of 4 percent from CY2015 and the highest of any DPS region. Tangos members represented 28 percent of those convicted. Bloods accounted for 24 percent of convictions.

(U) DPS Region Three

(U) Region Three's most significant gangs for 2016 are the **Tango cliques** of the Rio Grande Valley (Vallucos) and Corpus Christi (Corpitos), **Texas Syndicate**, and the **TMM**.

(U) The largest and most active street gangs in Region Three are the **Sureños** (all sets), **Latin Kings**, and **Tri-City Bombers**. The largest and most active prison gangs are the **Tango cliques** within the Rio Grande Valley (Vallucos) and Corpus Christi (Corpitos), **Texas Syndicate**, **TMM**, and the **Texas Chicano Brotherhood**. Other gangs in this region with an active presence are the **Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang**, **Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos (HPL)**, and **Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (PRM)**. Officials report a high number of **Raza Unida** in the Corpus Christi and Alice areas. The TMM has a strong presence in the Del Rio-Eagle Pass-Uvalde area and in Laredo, as does HPL. The Bandidos and Aryan Brotherhood of Texas maintain an active presence in the Corpus Christi area. Officials in Hidalgo County also identify the presence of several local gangs, such as the **Po Boys**.

(U) Among all convicted tier-ranked gang members entering into TDCJ during CY2016, approximately 13 percent came from counties located in Region Three, resulting in no change from CY2015. Tangos members represented 31 percent of those convicted, with the Texas Syndicate accounting for 22 percent.

(U) DPS Region Four

(U) Region Four's most significant gangs for 2016 are **Barrio Azteca**, and the **Tango cliques** of El Paso (Chuco) and West Texas (WTX).

(U) The largest and most active street gangs in Region Four are **Sureños** (all sets), **Gangster Disciples**, and **Crips** (all sets). The largest and most active prison gangs are the **Tango cliques** in West Texas (West Texas Tangos) and El Paso (Chuco), **Barrio Azteca**, and **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**. Other significant gangs active throughout the region include **Texas Mexican Mafia**, **Texas Syndicate**, **Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang**, **Aryan Circle**, and **Latin Kings**.

(U) Amongst all convicted tier-ranked gang members entering into TDCJ during CY2016, approximately seven percent came from counties located in Region Four, resulting in no change from CY2015. Tangos members represent 37 percent of those convictions. Barrio Azteca accounted for 28 percent of convictions.

(U) DPS Region Five

(U) Region Five's most significant gangs for 2016 are the **Tango clique** of West Texas, **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**, **Crips** (all sets), and **Aryan Circle**.

(U) The largest and most active street gangs in Region Five are **Crips** (all sets), **Sureños** (all sets), **Bloods** (all sets), and **Latin Kings**. The largest and most active prison gangs are the **West Texas Tangos** (WTX), **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**, and **Aryan Circle**. Other gangs reported by law enforcement in Region Five are **Texas Syndicate**, **TMM**, **Barrio Azteca**, and the **Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang**.

(U) Among all convicted tier-ranked gang members entering into TDCJ during CY2016, approximately seven percent came from counties located in Region Five, resulting in no change from CY2015. Tangos members represent 44 percent of those convictions, the highest amongst all DPS Regions. Crips accounted for 12 percent.

(U) DPS Region Six

(U) Region Six's most significant gangs for 2016 are the **Tango cliques** of San Antonio (Orejon) and Austin (La Capirucha), and **TMM**.

(U) The largest and most active street gangs in Region Six are the **Bloods** (all sets), **Sureños** (all sets), **Crips** (all sets), and **Gangster Disciples**. The largest and most active prison gangs are **Tango cliques** in San Antonio (Orejon) and Austin (La Capirucha), **TMM**, **Aryan Brotherhood of Texas**, **Texas Syndicate**, and **Aryan Circle**. Other significant gangs found in this region include the **Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang**. Officials report high activity by Gangster Disciples in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood area. Aryan Brotherhood and Aryan Circle are active from northern Travis County up to Bell County. Bandidos maintain a significant presence in Bexar and Comal counties.

(U) Among all convicted tier-ranked gang members entering into TDCJ during CY2016, approximately 20 percent came from counties located in Region six, resulting in no change from CY2015. Tangos members represent 31 percent of those convicted, and the TMM accounted for 19 percent.

(U) Gang Organization

(U) The internal structure of gangs in Texas comprise of a variety of organizational and leadership models. These models vary in the extent to which the organization is centrally or hierarchically organized. Several of the Tier 1 gangs, for example, use different organizational models, such as:

- (U) **Paramilitary** models include a hierarchical structure with clear distinction between ranks, and often include military titles such as general, captain, lieutenant, sergeant and soldier. Senior leaders are able to issue orders to subordinates, which are carried out as instructed. Gangs using this model include TMM.
- (U) **Regional Cell** models are composed of several cells that are part of the same organization, but generally act independently of one another at an operational level. Each cell may have a strict internal hierarchy similar to a paramilitary model, though there may be little coordinated command and control between cells. Texas Syndicate and MS-13 are examples of gangs with a regional cell model.
- (U) **Cliques** of gangs tend to adopt a common culture and identity, but have few tangible connections to each other. Each clique may have a senior member that acts as a leader, and larger cliques may have a more structured hierarchy. In some cases, cliques of the same gang may work in opposition to each other. Examples of clique-based gangs are the Bloods and Crips street gangs.
- (U) **Loose Affiliation** gangs have relaxed membership requirements and little to no detectable leadership hierarchy. This model tends to be the most dynamic, allowing for rapid growth while simultaneously limiting the extent to which members can be effectively managed. Tango Blast is an example of a gang with a loose affiliation model.

(U) *Race and Gangs*

(U) Most gangs in Texas have membership based along race or ethnic identity. This characteristic of gang organization can be attributed to the prison environment, as inmates tend to congregate or associate with others of their own ethnicity, or band together for protection when racially outnumbered. Many gangs cite race as their reason for having organized, and some go further by professing racial superiority over others. While individual members of these gangs may hold racial bias or prejudice, the gangs themselves will often engage in business arrangements with gangs of another race when it is mutually convenient and profitable. In Texas, most gangs will work with nearly any group in order to further their criminal objectives, regardless of the racial makeup or ideology.

(U) All 20 gangs identified in the tier ranking list have a membership based along racial or ethnic lines, with the exception of the Bandidos, whose membership is comprised of both Hispanic and white males. Examples of predominantly white gangs include the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas and the Aryan Circle. Predominantly Hispanic gangs include the Texas Mexican Mafia and the Texas Syndicate, and predominantly black gangs include the Gangster Disciples, the Bloods, and the Crips.

(U) *Females and Gangs*

(U) The vast majority of gang members identified in Texas are males. In 2013, the National Gang Intelligence Center reported females could represent up to 10 percent of the gang population in some parts of the nation. In Texas, that number is believed to be much lower. TDCJ identifies only a few hundred

female gang members in comparison to the several thousand male gang members they have documented. Most females with gang affiliations serve in support roles, acting as drug, money, and communication coordinators for the gang. However, there are a few gangs allowing females to serve as associates or members. According to TDCJ data, the most confirmed and suspected female gang memberships in Texas belong to the Crips and the Bloods, with a significant female membership belonging to Aryan Brotherhood of Texas and Aryan Circle.

(U) Also identified as having female gang members are Sureños, Tangos, and the Latin Kings, whose females are known as Latin Queens. Although females generally are not considered part of most gangs in Texas, there is some evidence they are moving from support roles to more active roles in the gangs' criminal activities.

(U) Gang Recruitment and Identification

(U) Gang recruitment occurs within prisons, schools, online, neighborhoods, and from within families. The prison system and county jails offer gangs unique opportunities for recruiting new members, who may join for protection during incarceration. Gangs may recruit in order to have a majority of the population and defend themselves from other gangs. Some gangs require new members to serve the gang for life, while others allow members to leave after their release from prison.

(U) Large gangs in Texas often direct young members of the smaller street gangs to commit crimes on their behalf. After completing these tasks, the members will advance up and join the larger gang. Street gangs tend to recruit juveniles within their neighborhoods and schools, citing promises of money, popularity, and family. Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs oversee several support clubs, and are capable of recruiting from those club members whom have proven themselves valuable and loyal.

(U) Gang members use unique identifiers to claim their affiliations, including, but not limited to, tattoos, hand signals, colors, and graffiti. Most gangs tend to use one or several distinctive symbols incorporated into tattoos, patches, or graffiti to identify members and turf. These symbols are often associated with each gang's heritage or hometown, and may include an image or a combination of numbers and letters. For example, the Texas Syndicate uses the numbers "20-19" to represent the twentieth and nineteenth letter of the alphabet, "TS." Other gangs use the telephone area code of their hometown. Although gangs continue to display tattoos and insignia that clearly show their affiliation, some members conceal the symbols within other tattoos to avoid detection from law enforcement. Hand signals and the wearing of similar colors serves as other ways for gang members to identify each other. Some gangs share signals and colors, while others are unique. Street gangs commonly use graffiti to identify themselves and the territory they claim.

(U) There is an increasing amount of gang-related material found on the internet and social media. Gang members showcase self-produced music videos, glorifying the gang lifestyle and taunting would-be rivals. Gang members use social media sites to upload photos of themselves with weapons, drugs, and money. Ultimately, gang members using social media to advertise the gang lifestyle sends a distorted image to impressionable youth, thereby creating perhaps the greatest mass recruiting technique witnessed thus far, whether intentionally or not. Despite recognizing that law enforcement monitors social media, gang members still self-promote on the internet.

(U) Gang Relationships

(U) Relationships between gangs are nearly unavoidable since large numbers of gang members often live and operate in the same communities. Their relationship levels range from mutual protection and profit, to bitter rivalries resulting in inter-gang violence. Gang relationships remain dynamic and largely depend on specific areas of the state.

(U) When comparing gang relationships in years past, gangs are becoming increasingly opportunistic and willing to have working relationships with other gangs, including those who are historically considered rivals or enemies. The focus has shifted more toward mutually beneficial, profit-motivated associations. Greater weight is placed on how criminal ventures can be expanded and less on who is assisting in that expansion. This variable relationship is also common among Texas gangs who have a relationship or an association with Transnational Criminal Organizations, Mexican cartels, or in some cases multiple drug trafficking organizations.

(U) Gang members may enter the prison system and align themselves with other gangs for protection if there are few or no members from their own gang. As a result, smaller gangs benefit from protection during incarceration, and the larger gangs expand their criminal influence. This particular cooperation between gangs is identified as hybrid gang memberships. Hybrid membership is characterized as an individual having multiple affiliations with various gangs, which we assess to be occurring more frequently as gang members continue to expand their criminal network of contacts. By far, the most common hybrid gang in Texas is Tango Blast and associated Tango cliques, primarily due to their lack of a formal structure or commitment to the gang, among other factors.

(U) One of the most serious issues facing public safety is the relationships developed between gangs and the Mexican cartels. These relationships enhance and widen a gang's scope of criminal activity. Home invasions, assassinations, and kidnapping are a few examples of the crimes committed by gang members on behalf of cartels. Cartel relationships increase resources and profitability, along with violence, for all criminal parties involved. As these relationships strengthen, so does the threat to public safety.

(U) The Role of Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Support Clubs

(U) Virtually all outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMG) work with several motorcycle support clubs. Support clubs often vow their allegiance and support to their respective “mother club.” Support clubs usually pay a monthly fee, or dues, to the nearest mother club chapter in the area. These fees keep the support club in good standing, and they can rely on the protection of the OMG from other motorcycle clubs. Support clubs also routinely hold parties and other events to raise funds, such as toy runs, that benefit both their support club and the associated outlaw motorcycle gang.

(U) There are different levels of support clubs. For example, the Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (BOMG) has a large number of support clubs that wear reverse colors on their cuts/colors/jackets (i.e. gold on red instead of red on gold). These support clubs must receive permission from the BOMG to wear the affiliated colors, as only sanctioned BOMG support clubs can wear the gold on red colors, and no club can wear red on gold. Other motorcycle clubs wear a “heart patch” or “I Support the Fat Mexican” patch on the chest-area of their vest, while maintaining their normal colors. Some members also wear a “known associate” patch or SYLB (Support Your Local Bandidos) on the front of their cuts.



(U) Bandidos OMG Support Club “Cookie.”

(U) Some support club members use their club to gain admittance into the OMG they are supporting. Likewise, OMGs exploit support clubs, also referred to as “farm clubs,” as an entity to choose well-suited prospective members.

(U) Motorcycle support club members may conduct criminal activities at the request of the mother club, or on their own accord. The range of criminal activities is wide, from drug distribution to targeted assaults. Although not all members of a support club are involved in criminal activity, a small subset of members historically have shown to be engaged in organized crime. Recent examples include:

- (U) In August 2016, an aggravated robbery occurred in El Paso, Texas. Four individuals, three ranking BOMG members and one motorcycle support club member, were arrested for attacking a member of a rival motorcycle club.⁵
- (U) In May 2016, eight members affiliated with La Familia Motorcycle Club, a support club of the BOMG, were arrested in Odessa during a multi-agency drug investigation dubbed Operation Buying Pebbles.⁶

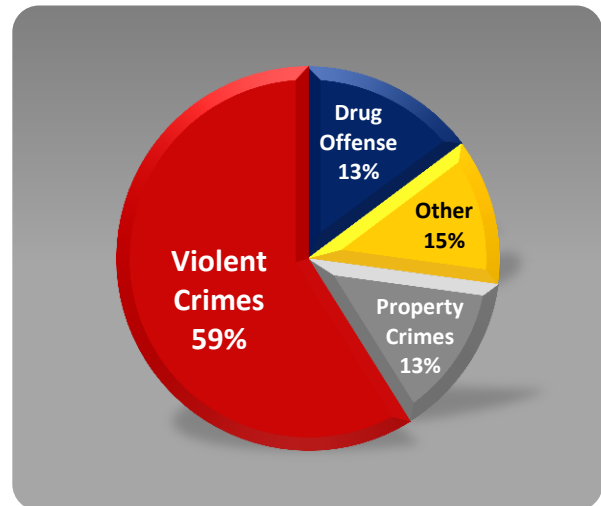
(U) Gang Involvement in Criminal Activity

(U) Gang members in Texas engage in a variety of criminal activities ranging from non-violent, white-collar crimes to violent crimes such as murders. Gangs in Texas have the ability to commit transnational crimes, such as human smuggling and cross-border drug trafficking, not available or as profitable in other states. The overall extent of gang activity is difficult to measure with great accuracy since the documentation of gang affiliation is often known only after an arrest has been made.

(U) Our analysis of conviction data is based on the offense of record for confirmed and suspected gang members incarcerated within TDCJ at the end of FY2016.⁴ The offense of record is the offense that incarcerates the offender for the longest period of time. It is important to note this data only accounts for the 20 tier-ranked gangs identified in this assessment. Offenses are collated into four categories of crime: Violent, Drug, Property, and Other. Violent offenses are defined as those that involve force or threat of force toward persons. Property crimes are theft-type offenses involving the taking of money or property, or the damaging of property, but there is no force or threat of force against any person.

(U) An indication of the level of violence associated with gang activity is shown in *Figure 7*, and confirms that gang members in Texas commit many violent crimes in the state. Nearly 60 percent of identified prison gang members are serving sentences for violent crimes, including robbery (23%), homicide (16%), assault (all types) (14%), and sexual assault (6%). Drug-related offenses account for 13 percent of gang convictions in TDCJ. Other significant criminal gang activities include property crimes (13%), such as burglary (10%), theft/larceny (2%), and motor vehicle theft (1%). Crimes identified in the “Other” category include crimes against public administration, such as weapon offenses (4%), evading/escape (3%), and fraud/forgery (1%).

(U) *Figure 7: Offense Types for Gang Members Incarcerated in Texas Prisons*



(U) Approximately 4,200 gang members were released from prison in Texas during FY2015, according to combined Texas and federal prison data. Members of Tango Blast and their associated Tango cliques constituted nearly 40 percent of all gang members released. Crime rates can potentially increase upon gang members' release back into the community, as some members are required to immediately report to gang leadership and begin earning profit for the organization.

⁴ The use of this data carries several limitations. First, it is sometimes unknown if the offender committed the offense as a gang member, or became a gang member after incarceration. Also, offense data does not always provide an accurate representation of the actual crime or crimes committed as it may reflect a lesser charge resulting from a plea bargain. Lastly, some convictions do not appear during the scope of analysis due to the length of time between the offense and conviction dates; thus, not all convictions are accounted for within the research period.

(U) Gang Involvement in Human Trafficking

(U) Gangs across Texas continue to engage in human trafficking, including commercial sex trafficking and compelling prostitution of both adult and minor victims. The potential for high, sustainable profits and a perceived low risk of detection appeals to many gang members and their associates, who often operate independently of the gang itself. Gang members recruit and groom victims with false promises of love, affection, employment, and family lifestyle, but continuously compel their victims through physical force, fraud and coercion.

(U) Multiple gangs in Texas have been reported to be involved in human trafficking, to include Bloods, Crips, Gangster Disciples, Sureños, Southwest Cholos, and MS-13. Reporting of gang involvement in labor trafficking in Texas is limited. Many DPS human trafficking investigations of gang members include Blood and Crips gang members and associates, often involving minor victims for commercial sex purposes.

(U) One example of gang members involved in human trafficking include:

- (U) In November of 2016, nine defendants, majority being Polywood Crips gang members in Fort Worth, TX, pleaded guilty in federal court to a sex trafficking conspiracy involving a juvenile. All suspects were arrested on charges to include sex trafficking of children; sex trafficking of adults through force, fraud or coercion; and conspiracy to engage in child sex trafficking. The defendants used backpage.com to advertise their services and would subsequently brag on Facebook about the money earned from pimping.⁷ Some of the pimps' Facebook pages contained publicly visible posts that refer to their making money through "pimping."⁸ According to the affidavit filed, female minor and adult victims would engage in commercial sex acts at the direction of the pimps, with all money collected by the suspects.

(U) Outlook

(U) Based on a review of current intelligence and knowledge of gang activity, we make the following assessments:

- (U) The overall gang threat in Texas will persist during the coming year, given previous estimated increases in overall gang membership in Texas. The gangs working directly, and indirectly, with the Mexican cartels will continue to represent a unique threat to the state as they help facilitate the smuggling of persons, drugs, and weapons into and around Texas.
- (U) The threat posed by individual gangs will change over time. Changes in gang leadership and the impact of law enforcement action will have an effect on a gang's ability to operate effectively. We anticipate many of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 gangs will continue to be significant threats to Texas due to their large membership numbers, relationships with cartels, high levels of transnational criminal activity, and other factors.
- (U) As gang members continue using violence in furtherance of their criminal objectives and law enforcement officers face threats in the line of duty, we are concerned about the potential for future gang-related targeting of officers in Texas. As this threat continues to evolve, we will continue to monitor gang activity that may pose a threat to officer safety.
- (U) As Transnational Criminal Organizations fight to maintain or increase their share of the lucrative drug and human smuggling markets, Texas-based gangs will continue to play an essential role in supporting cartel operations on both sides of the border. The cartels will likely seek to expand their existing networks in Texas by leveraging their relationships with gangs. We expect the relationships between individual gangs and cartels to remain fluid, and possibly adapt and evolve in response to changes in the cartel landscape in Mexico.
- (U) We assess gangs conducting sex trafficking operations in Texas will continue due to the potential for large and sustainable profits and the perceived low risk of detection by law enforcement. However, as public awareness of human and sex trafficking increases, so does the chance for potential victims to recognize the dangers and signs of trafficking, and therefore reduce the number of victims.

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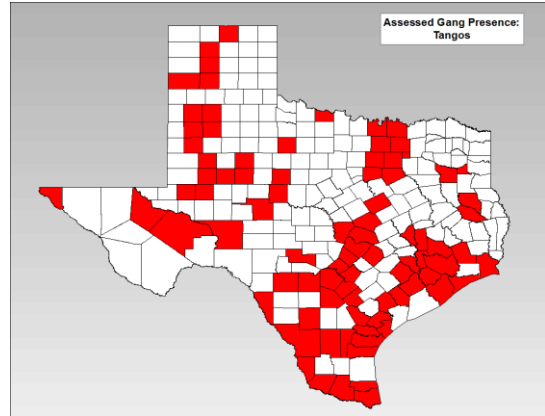
(U) Appendix 1: Overview of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Gangs

(U) The following pages provide a brief overview of the most significant gangs in Texas, including a map showing the areas of the state where each gang's presence and activities are assessed to be most concentrated, based on information provided from multiple sources. The absence of shading on a particular part of the map does not necessarily indicate that the gang does not have a presence there, and the concentration of the gang's activity varies within the shaded area.

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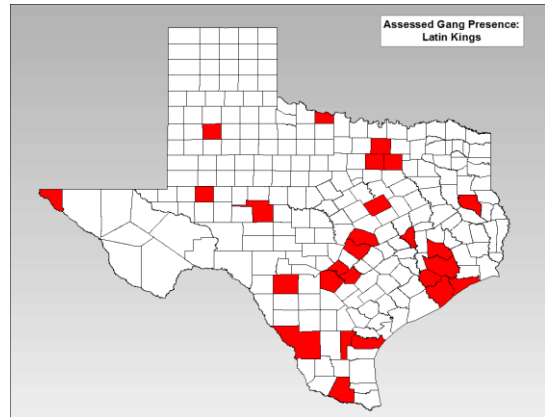
(U) Tier 1: Tango Blast and Tango Cliques

(U) Tango Blast and its associated cliques are located in most metropolitan areas across Texas. Tango Blast first established as a self-protection group against more structured prison gangs, such as the TMM and Texas Syndicate. Tangos have since grown exponentially and continue to boast the highest membership numbers among Texas prison gangs. Their rapid evolution, high level of criminal activity, propensity for violence, and relationships with Mexican cartels positions Tangos as the most significant gang threat to Texas.



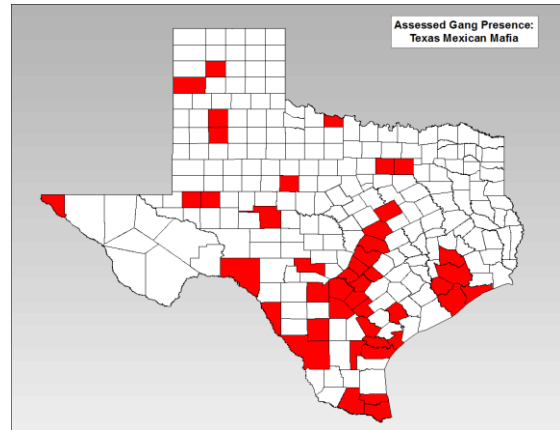
(U) Tier 1: Latin Kings

(U) The Latin Kings is a violent street gang originating from Chicago, Illinois, in the early 1960s. Originally created to overcome racial prejudice, the gang soon became and continues to be a criminal force. The gang migrated into Texas shortly after its creation and began to open local chapters. Due to its interstate structure and criminal growth, Latin Kings is a continuous threat to the State of Texas.



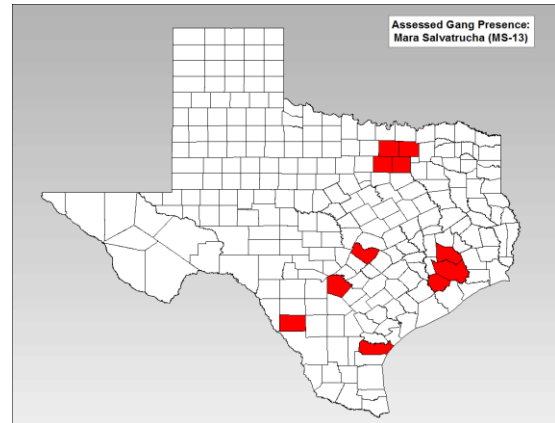
(U) Tier 1: Texas Mexican Mafia

(U) The TMM formed within the Texas prison system in 1984 as a means for inmates to protect themselves from the Texas Syndicate. They have since grown into one of the most dominant and disciplined gangs in Texas. Despite continuous law enforcement targeting, the TMM has upheld its membership size, commitment to the gang, and involvement in violent crimes. The TMM will likely continue to remain organizationally effective and engage in criminal activity, and thus remain one of Texas' most significant gangs.



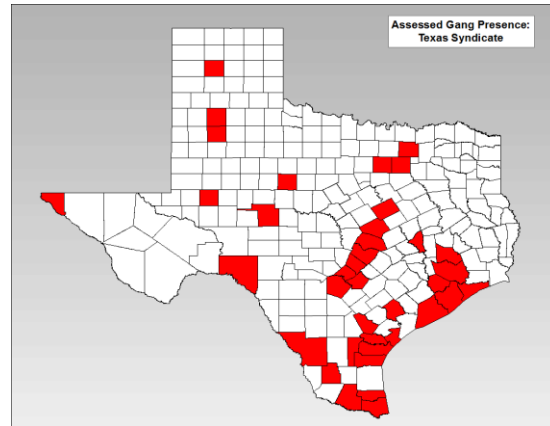
(U) Tier 1: Mara Salvatrucha

(U) MS-13 formed on the streets of Los Angeles in the 1980s as a way for Salvadorian immigrants to protect themselves from other street gangs in the area. MS-13 is now arguably the most recognized transnational street gang in the world, with ongoing command, control, and coordination between gang leaders and cliques in several different countries. While the increase in the presence of the MS-13 grows, it appears that Texas is continually used a transitional zone, as gang members are traveling onward to the U.S. East coast. The increase in violent activity in Texas along with the constant influx of illegal members crossing into the state exemplifies the gang's Tier 1 threat level.



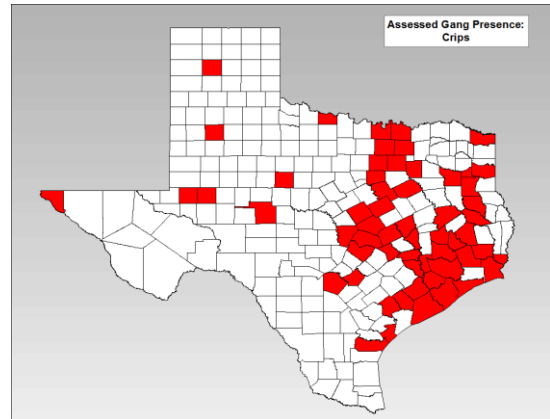
(U) Tier 2: Texas Syndicate

(U) The Texas Syndicate is a violent prison gang that formed in the California penal system over 40 years ago, eventually moving into TDCJ prisons and onto the streets of Texas. Recent law enforcement investigations targeting the gang have resulted in the arrest of high-ranking members, and their rival Tango Blast has weakened their strength in Texas prisons. Despite these setbacks, their level of violence and continued relationship with Mexican cartels makes the Texas Syndicate a resilient criminal threat to Texas.



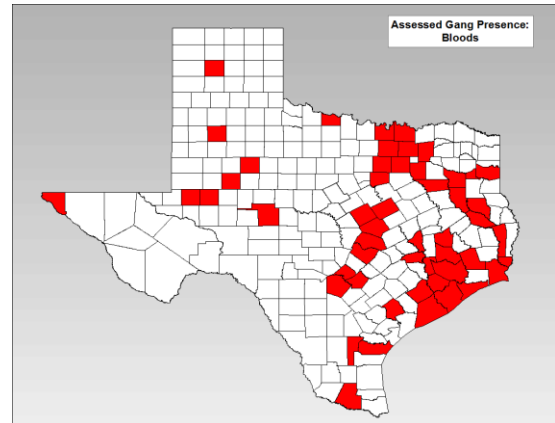
(U) Tier 2: Crips

(U) The Crips is a criminal street gang founded in Los Angeles, California, in the late 1960s with ties to Folk-Nation-affiliated gangs. The name “Crips” does not define a single gang, but rather an identity with which many gang cliques associate themselves. Crips gangs have maintained a documented presence in Texas since the mid-1980s. Members include juveniles and adults, and their criminal activities continue to threaten the larger metropolitan areas of Texas. Multiple cities in Texas have instituted gang injunctions against the Crips and their rivals, the Bloods.



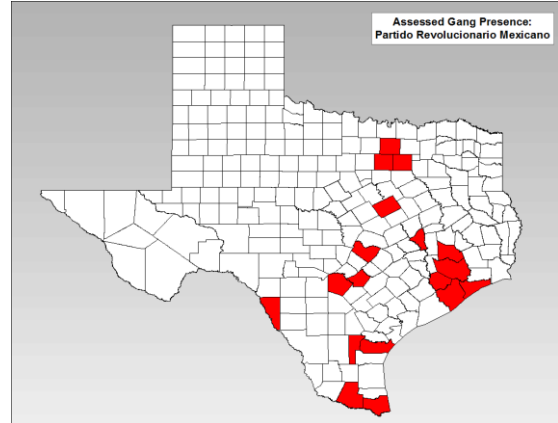
(U) Tier 2: Bloods

(U) The Bloods are a violent street gang that originated in Los Angeles, California, in the early 1970s, with ties to People-Nation-affiliated gangs. The gang originally developed as an offshoot clique of the Crips gang. The Bloods' presence in Texas has been documented since the 1980s. Multiple cities in Texas have instituted gang injunctions against the Bloods and their rivals, the Crips. The Bloods' overall presence, the level of their criminal activity, and the violence perpetrated by its members qualify them as a serious threat in Texas.



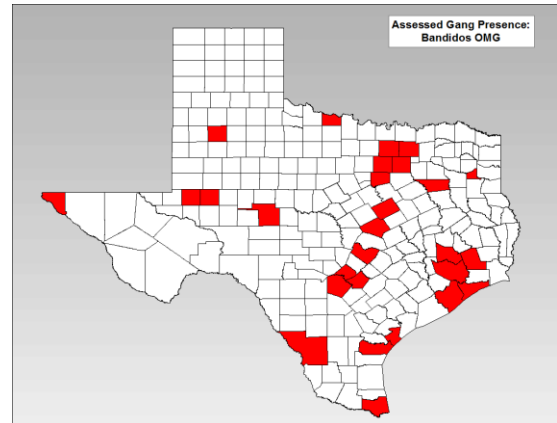
(U) Tier 2: Partido Revolucionario Mexicano

(U) The Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (PRM) is an organized prison gang operating in Mexico and Texas. PRM is composed of mainly Mexican nationals, many of whom were illegal aliens who committed crimes in Texas, and were subsequently deported once they were released from prison. Deported Partido Revolucionario Mexicano members often re-enter the United States and establish themselves as members in Texas. Partido Revolucionario Mexicano now allows U.S. citizens to become members of the gang.



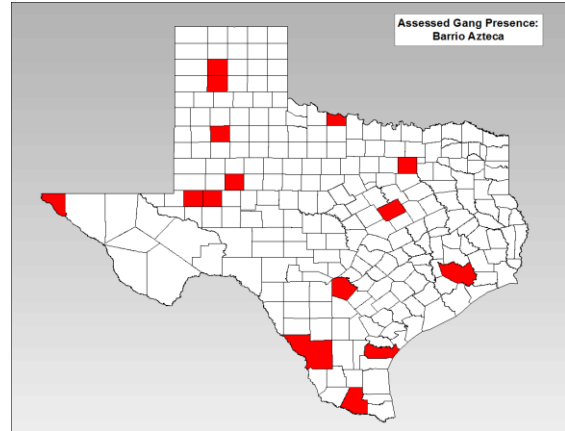
(U) Tier 2: Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang

(U) Formed in the 1960s, the Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (BOMG) conducts its illegal activities as covertly as possible and generally tries to avoid high profile activities. However, members are not covert about making their presence known, frequently wearing their gang colors, insignia, and riding in large groups. They seek to turn public sentiment in their favor by organizing frequent charity runs.



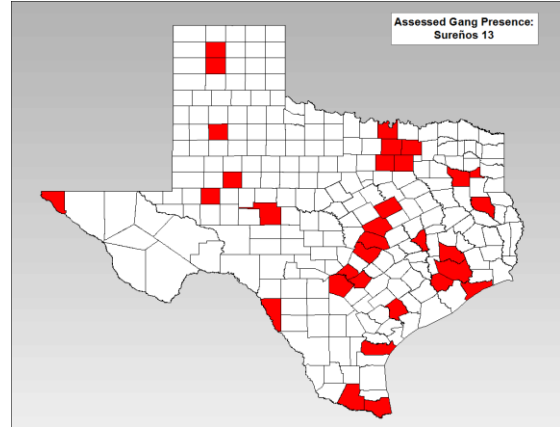
(U) Tier 2: Barrio Azteca

(U) Continuous, successful law enforcement efforts targeting Barrio Azteca (BA), along with the deteriorating influence of the Juarez Cartel, have lessened the gang's statewide threat. In addition, recent infighting has caused internal gang relations to be strained. Although predominantly located in El Paso and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, BA members have been previously identified in the Midland-Odessa, and San Angelo areas.



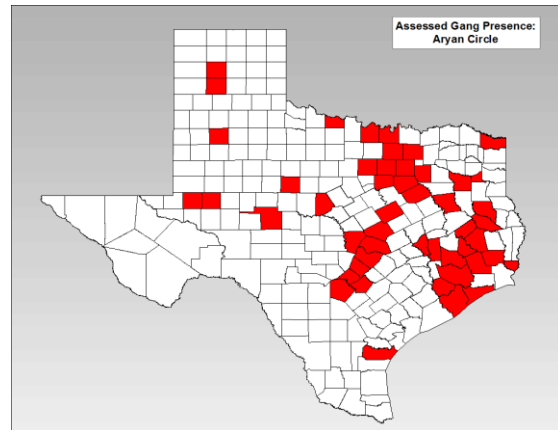
(U) Tier 2: Sureños

(U) The Sureños originated as a gang confederation in Southern California closely aligned under the umbrella of the California Mexican Mafia. As such, they often utilize the number 13 as a sign of allegiance to the California Mexican Mafia (the letter M being the 13th letter in the alphabet). Although many gangs in Texas may use the Sureños name, not all of them are affiliated with the California-based confederation. We assess that Sureños will continue to strive to establish a stronger presence in Texas in the near future.



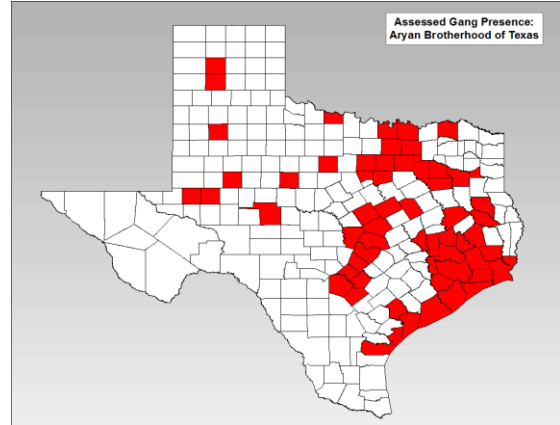
(U) Tier 2: Aryan Circle

(U) The Aryan Circle (AC) was formed in 1985 inside the Texas prison system as a preservation of the white race in a hostile environment, but has since evolved to preserving the white race throughout the world. However, their white supremacy ideologies come secondary to illicit business/profiting criminal activities. Although the Aryan Circle is not a threat to the border areas of Texas, their continued threat lies elsewhere around the state because of their involvement in violent crimes, the methamphetamine business, and firearms trafficking. Multi-agency investigations continue to affect AC's leadership structure and effectiveness throughout Texas.



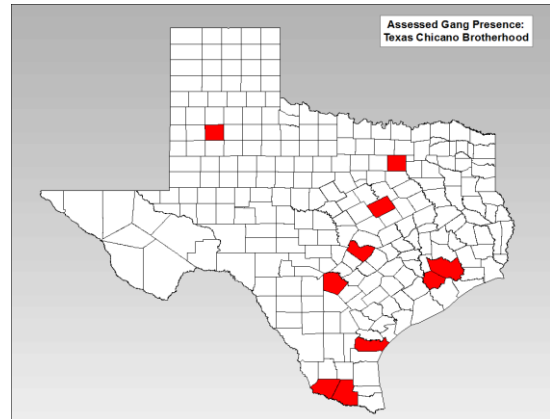
(U) Tier 2: Aryan Brotherhood of Texas

(U) The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (ABT) was formed as a white supremacist prison gang, but places its racist ideology secondary to its everyday criminal activities. Although law enforcement continues to disrupt ABT operations and leadership structure around the state, the gang remains to be a significant threat due to their continued involvement in violent crimes, the methamphetamine business, firearms trafficking, and frequent property crimes. The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas has recently dropped to the bottom of Tier 2.



(U) Tier 2: Texas Chicano Brotherhood

(U) The Texas Chicano Brotherhood (TxCB) emerged in Hidalgo, Texas after its two founding members defected from the Tri-City Bombers street gang. The prison gang follows the traditional philosophy of “blood in, blood out” membership, common with other prison gangs. Historically, the TxCB recruited its members in prison; however, the gang has been forced to recruit members from the free world after established, larger prison gangs prohibited them from recruiting in the prison system. Their relationships with Mexican cartels make the TxCB a significant threat to Texas.



(U) Appendix 2: Other Contributing Agencies

(U) DPS recognizes the following agencies for their contribution to the Texas Gang Investigative Database (TxGang), as of December 2016:

Addison Police Department
Alice Police Department
Alief Independent School District Police Department
Alvin Independent School District Police Department
Amarillo Police Department
Anderson County Sheriff's Office
Angelina County Sheriff's Office
Aransas Pass Police Department
Arlington Police Department
Austin Police Department
Balch Springs Police Department
Baytown Police Department
Beeville Police Department
Bell County Juvenile Probation Services
Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections
Bexar County Sheriff's Office
Big Spring Police Department
Brazoria County Sheriff's Office
Brenham Police Department
Brownsville Police Department
Bryan Police Department
Carrollton Police Department
Cedar Park Police Department
Center Police Department
Cleveland Independent School District Police Department
Clute Police Department
College Station Police Department
Comal County Sheriff's Office
Conroe Police Department
Converse Police Department
Cooke County Sheriff's Office
Corpus Christi Police Department
Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District Police Department
Dallas County Sheriff's Office
Dallas Police Department
Denison Police Department
Denton County Sheriff's Office

Donna Independent School District Police Department
Dumas Police Department
Edinburg Police Department
El Paso County Sheriff's Office
El Paso Police Department
Ellis County Sheriff's Office
Erath County Sheriff's Office
Eules Police Department
Everman Police Department
Farmers Branch Police Department
Forney Police Department
Fort Bend County Constables Office - Precinct 1
Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office
Fort Worth Police Department
Frisco Police Department
Gainesville Police Department
Galveston County Sheriff's Office
Galveston Police Department
Garland Police Department
Georgetown Police Department
Gladewater Police Department
Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District Police Department
Grand Prairie Police Department
Guadalupe County Sheriff's Office
Haltom City Police Department
Hansford County Sheriff's Office
Harlingen Police Department
Harris County Constables Office - Precinct 1
Harris County Sheriff's Office
Hays County Sheriff's Office
Hidalgo County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office
Hill County Sheriff's Office
Hondo Police Department
Houston County Sheriff's Office
Houston Independent School District Police Department
Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority Police Department
Houston Police Department
Humble Independent School District Police Department
Hunt County Sheriff's Office
Irving Police Department
Jersey Village Police Department
Jim Wells County Sheriff's Office

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Joshua Police Department
Katy Independent School District Police Department
Katy Police Department
Kaufman Police Department
Kenedy Police Department
Kerr County Sheriff's Office
Kilgore Police Department
Killeen Police Department
Kleberg County Sheriff's Office
Klein Independent School District Police Department
La Marque Police Department
La Salle County Sheriff's Office
Lake Dallas Police Department
Lancaster Police Department
Laredo Police Department
Lewisville Police Department
Liberty County District Attorney's Office
Longview Police Department
Lorena Police Department
Lubbock County Sheriff's Office
Lubbock Police Department
Lufkin Police Department
Mansfield Police Department
Marble Falls Police Department
McAllen Police Department
McKinney Police Department
McLennan County Juvenile Probation Office
McLennan County Sheriff's Office
Mesquite Police Department
Midland Police Department
Mission Police Department
Missouri City Police Department
Montgomery County Constable's Office - Precinct 3
Montgomery County Juvenile Probation Department
Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Nacogdoches County Sheriff's Office
Nacogdoches Police Department
New Braunfels Police Department
Nueces County Sheriff's Office
Odessa Police Department
Onalaska Police Department
Parker County Sheriff's Office
Pasadena Police Department

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Pearland Police Department
Pflugerville Independent School District Police Department
Pflugerville Police Department
Pharr Police Department
Plano Police Department
Primera Police Department
Quinlan Police Department
Randall County Sheriff's Office
Refugio County Sheriff's Office
Richardson Police Department
Richland Hills Police Department
Robstown Police Department
Rockport Police Department
Rockwall County Sheriff's Office
Rosenberg Police Department
Round Rock Police Department
Sachse Police Department
San Angelo Police Department
San Antonio Police Department
San Juan Police Department
San Marcos Police Department
San Patricio District Attorney's Office
Santa Fe Police Department
Seguin Police Department
Shelby County Sheriff's Office
Sherman Police Department
Socorro Independent School District Police Department
Spearman Police Department
Spring Branch Independent School District Police Department
Spring Independent School District Police Department
Sugar Land Police Department
Tarrant County District Attorney's Office
Tarrant County Sheriff's Office
Temple Police Department
Texas City Police Department
Texas Department Juvenile Justice
The Colony Police Department
Tiki Island Police Department
Tom Green County Sheriff's Office
Tomball Police Department
Travis County Sheriff's Office
Tyler Police Department
U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives - Beaumont

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection - Carrizo Springs Border Patrol Station

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

University Of Texas - Houston Police Department

Victoria Police Department

Weatherford Police Department

Wharton Police Department

Wichita Falls Police Department

Williamson County Sheriff's Office

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(U) Agencies participating in Operation BorderStar are listed below:

El Paso JOIC Sector

USBP
CBP – OFO
ICE
West TX HIDTA
EPIC
TMF
DPS
TPWD
ATF
FBI
USMS
US Army, Ft. Bliss CID

El Paso CO SO
Hudspeth CO SO
Dona Ana CO SO (NM)
Grant CO SO (NM)
Hidalgo CO SO (NM)
Luna CO SO (NM)
Otero CO SO (NM)
Anthony PD
El Paso PD
Horizon City PD
Ysleta Del Sur Tribal PD
El Paso ISD PD

University of Texas El Paso PD
El Paso Community College PD
El Paso Office of Emergency Management
Texas Tech University PD
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
Texas Attorney General, El Paso
Union Pacific Railroad PD
Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission
El Paso County Constables

Marfa JOIC Sector

USBP
CBP - OFO
ICE /HSI
NPS
West TX HIDTA
TMF
TPWD

DPS
Brewster CO SO
Culberson CO SO
Hudspeth CO SO
Jeff Davis CO SO
Pecos CO SO
Presidio CO SO

Reeves CO SO
Terrell CO SO
Alpine PD
Fort Stockton PD
Pecos PD
Presidio PD

Del Rio JOIC Sector

CBP-OFO
DEA
DPS
FBI
HSI-ICE
IBWC
NPS
South TX HIDTA
Texas Military Forces
Zavala Co Constable

TPWD
USBP
USCG
US Marshals
Crystal City PD
Del Rio PD
Dimmit CO SO
Maverick CO SO
Uvalde CO SO

Val Verde CO SO
Zavala CO SO
38th Judicial Dist.
Dimmit CO Constable PCT 2
Dimmit CO Constable PCT 3
Edwards CO SO
Kinney CO So
Real CO So
Uvalde PD

Laredo JOIC Sector

CBP
ICE
TPWD
TMF
DPS

Duval CO S O
Frio CO SO
Jim Hogg CO SO
La Salle CO SO
Webb CO SO

Zapata CO SO
Dilley PD
Laredo PD
Pearsall PD

Rio Grande Valley JOIC Sector

CBP – USBP
CBP – OFO
ATF
ICE
NCIS
NICB
USCG
US Fish & Wildlife

Starr Co HIDTA
DPS – THP, CID, AVN
Texas Rangers
TPWD
Texas Military Forces
TXNG CDAE
Brooks CO SO
Cameron CO SO

Hidalgo CO SO
Kenedy CO SO
Starr CO SO
Hidalgo CO Pct 1
Hidalgo CO Pct 2
Hidalgo CO Pct 3
Hidalgo CO Pct 4
Willacy CO

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Alamo PD
Brownsville PD
Donna PD
Donna ISD PD
Edcouch PD
Elsa PD
Edinburg PD
Harlingen PD
Hidalgo PD
La Feria PD
La Grulla PD

La Joya PD
La Villa PD
Los Fresnos PD
McAllen PD
Mercedes PD
Mission PD
Palmhurst PD
Palmview PD
Penitas PD
Pharr PD
Raymondville PD

Rio Grande City PD
Roma PD
San Benito PD
San Juan PD
Santa Rosa PD
Sullivan City PD
TDCJ Segovia Prison
UTPA PD
UTB PD
Weslaco PD
Willacy CO DA's Office

Coastal Bend JOIC Sector

USBP
CBP – OFO
ICE
FBI
ATF
DEA
USCG
US Marshalls
US Fish and Wildlife
US Parks Service-PINS
US Postal Inspector
TPWD
Texas Dept of Trans
Houston HIDTA
San Antonio HIDTA
TMF
DPS
Aransas CO SO
Bee CO SO

Calhoun CO SO
Dewitt CO SO
Goliad CO SO
Gonzales CO SO
Guadalupe CO SO
Jackson CO SO
Jim Wells CO SO
Karnes CO SO
Kleberg CO SO
Lavaca CO SO
Matagorda CO SO
Live Oak CO SO
Matagorda CO SO
McMullen CO SO
Nueces CO SO
Refugio CO SO
San Patricio CO SO
Victoria CO SO
Wharton CO SO

Alice PD
Bay City PD
Beeville PD
Corpus Christi PD
Cuero PD
Driscoll PD
El Campo PD
George West PD
Hallettsville PD
Kingsville PD
Orange Grove PD
Refugio PD
Robstown PD
Rockport PD
Seguin PD
Sinton PD
Three Rivers PD
Victoria PD

(U) References

- ¹ (U) National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. "2016 Preliminary End-of-Year Law Enforcement Officer Fatalities Report." December 29, 2016.
- ² (U) KPRC 2 News. "Motive revealed in deadly shooting of Deputy Darren Goforth," November 23, 2015.
- ³ (U) New York Times. "Five Dallas Officers Were Killed as Payback, Police Chief Says," July 8, 2016.
- ⁴ (U) This map represents an analytic assessment of where gang activity is likely most concentrated in Texas. This assessment is based on data from multiple sources.
- ⁵ (U) Martinez, Jesse. "Fourth man arrested in aggravated robbery involving motorcycle clubs". Kfoxtv.com, September 7, 2016.
- ⁶ (U) Miller, Nathaniel. "Feds arrest 33 in Thursday drug raids". Oaoa.com. May 26, 2016.
- ⁷ (U) Department of Justice. "Last Defendant Pleads Guilty to Gang Child Sex Trafficking Conspiracy," November 30, 2016.
- ⁸ (U) Smith, Mark David. "8 with ties to 'Polywood Crips' names in federal prostitution case," Star-Telegram, July 27, 2016.