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Operation Gang Up

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GANG PROFILES

Abstract profiling national gangs in northeastern Pennsylvania from the 2011 Eastern Pennsylvania Drug and Gang Threat Assessment product by National Center on Gang Intelligence.

Gang Profiles

The Eastern Pennsylvania Drug and Gang Threat Assessment 2011 report discusses current gang trends and activities in the local region. The report mentions the influence of New York City and northern New Jersey gangs on eastern Pennsylvania, the types of gangs that are committing to the region and the gangs that pose the greatest threat. These involve various drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), violent gangs that rival one another, and more. The abstract does not include information about newer local gangs operating in the region. The primary purpose for this migration is to engage in drug-related sales in uncontested markets, where they will find greater opportunities with less competition. Other additional motives include legitimate employment opportunities; desire to be in closer proximity to incarcerated friends and family; avoidance of harsher punishments such as “three-strike laws;” and residing in rural areas with lesser law enforcement presence (pg. 3). By identifying the growing dangers in eastern Pennsylvania, law enforcement and community officials will be more knowledgeable and proactive toward the prevention of drug-related and violent offenses.

The report does not discuss the emergence or formation of local gangs that are forming in communities across the country. Local gangs are individuals from a neighborhood that form their own “gang.” Essentially, these are friends that band together for camaraderie and to engage in unlawful or threatening activity. Police in northeastern Pennsylvania have noted the formation of many small local gangs.

Dominican DTOs:

- ❖ Considered the most “prolific drug distributors in eastern PA,” they have recently begun to strengthen and settle in Hazleton where they will continue to expand drug distributing operations (pg. 1). These gangs have been dominating the distribution of cocaine and heroin in Hazleton since the late 1990s, but in recent years it has spread to a neighboring community of Wilkes-Barre called Kingston.
- ❖ Control most wholesale cocaine and heroin distribution in Allentown and Hazleton, and often play critical roles in supplying dealers in all different sized markets and communities, ranging from the large market of Philadelphia to the smaller region of the Poconos.
- ❖ Those operating in eastern PA are typically supplied by sources in New York, who in turn are supplied by Mexican DTOs.
- ❖ New wholesale sources have developed to allow a direct flow of multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine to Hazleton, which allows these traffickers to operate independently of New York City associates.
- ❖ Hazleton was chosen for the establishment of drug trafficking operations primarily because of its geographic location: Hazleton is near the intersection of Interstates 80 and 81, which provides access to major routes for shipments from

New York and southeastern states. Another reason is because of the large Dominican population in Hazleton which many “fugitives” may seek as a place to silently operate and escape from law enforcement in other areas (pg. 8-10).

- ❖ Generated proceeds are often smuggled in bulk out of the United States and into the Dominican Republic, where it is laundered through businesses (pg. 11).

Mexican DTOs:

- ❖ Dominant cocaine distributors in the Philadelphia and Reading drug markets as they continue to transport large quantities of cocaine from the Southwest Border and increasing the availability (pg. 1).
- ❖ To an extent they have had a longer presence in Reading living with a significant Mexican population. Since approximately 2008, Philadelphia has seen a significant increase in supplies.
- ❖ Originally supplied almost entirely by New York-based DTOs, Mexican DTOs now utilize Mexican sources directly from the Southwest Border which promotes more consistent availability (pg. 9).
- ❖ Mexican traffickers most often use I-95 or I-81 either directly from the Southwest Border or through Atlanta, Georgia or North Carolina. Private vehicles often contain 10 kilograms of cocaine or less, while less frequent commercial vehicles contain 75-100 kilograms; package deliveries destined for eastern, PA typically originate from Arizona, California, or Texas (pg. 11).
- ❖ They are predicted to expand in areas such as Harrisburg, Lancaster, and York, where permanent and migrant populations are rising (pg. 13).

Bloods:

- ❖ Most dominant gangs overall in smaller eastern PA drug markets; they have ties to Bloods in NYC, Trinitarios, who have associations with Dominican crime networks in NYC, and other east coast cities (pg. 3).
- ❖ According to the East Coast Gang Investigators Association, the origins of the Bloods street gang date back to approximately 1972. During this time, an internal struggle broke out as a sub-group of the Crips known as the Piru Street Boys decided to cut off peaceful ties. In order to signify a clear opposition to the Crips, the Pirus (along with other sub-groups such as the Brims, Denver Lanes, Bishops, Athens Park Boys, and Pueblos) began wearing red apparel in contrast to the blue worn by Crips. Out of this battle came the United Bloods, formed to combat the Crips in Los Angeles.
- ❖ Also according to the Gang Investigators Association, on the East Coast, the United Blood Nation was formed in the NYC jail system circa 1993 in Rikers Island’s George Mochen Detention Center. This group was formed out of protection from the predominantly Hispanic Latin Kings, whose members continuously targeted African American inmates. This prison gang, created to

emulate the LA Bloods, began spreading different sets throughout NYC, including the development of the Mad Stone Villains, Valentine Bloods, and Nine Trey Gangsters.

- ❖ By 1996, the Bloods have recruited thousands of members and established themselves as a particularly violent force in the gang world. “Blood in” rituals have been known to exist, which consist of razor blade and knife attacks during the commission of other crimes. Their drug networks have expanded greatly and some prevalent locations of Bloods include NYC, Upper New York State, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, North Carolina, Baltimore, and Hagerstown.
- ❖ Bloods are a major target for law enforcement due to their violent nature and tendencies to fight amongst each other and different Bloods sets. They lack a centralized regional or national structure/connection, but there have been efforts to unify the Bloods under the title “Damu,” which is a Swahili word synonymous for Blood.
- ❖ Some identifying features include referencing one another as “dawg,” branding an upside down triangle that resembles a dog’s paw on their upper bodies, and tattoos often portraying a bulldog to signify membership (in addition to the traditional red colors). The acronym M.O.B. has been used as well for identification, meaning “Member Of Blood” or “Money Over Bitches.” In more recent years, Bloods have become more involved with their People Nation affiliation. According to another source, a recent trend has been the inclusion of variations of red in apparel, such as brown, tan, rust, or burnt orange to signify “dried” blood.

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs):

- ❖ Drug trafficking is their primary criminal activity, although they have a much smaller presence and membership size in comparison to the street gangs in eastern PA. They specialize in cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana distribution and the principle active groups in the area are the Outlaws and Pagan’s Motorcycle Clubs (pg. 3).
- ❖ According to the Department of Justice, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs are highly structured criminal enterprises characterized by violent crime, weapon trafficking, and drug trafficking. The Hells Angels, Mongols, Bandidos, Outlaws, and Sons of Silence are among the most criminally active and violent OMGs, especially in terms of drug trafficking and cross-border smuggling. Because of this transnational scope, they pose a serious threat to domestic security and often work in conjunction with major drug trafficking organizations (DTOs).
- **The Hells Angels** consist of approximately 2,000-2,500 members, in over 230 chapters, spanning over 26 foreign countries and six continents. Involved in the production, transportation, and distribution of marijuana and methamphetamine, while also involved in transportation and distribution of cocaine, hashish, heroin, LSD, ecstasy, PCP, and diverted pharmaceuticals. Other

common crimes include extortion, assault, homicide, money laundering, and motorcycle theft (DOJ).

- **The Mongols** are known to be extremely violent and serve a particularly significant threat to those in the Pacific and Southwest areas of the country. Violence is often directed toward maintaining their reputation and to protect territory. Consisting of mostly Hispanic males with a history of using violence to settle conflict, the Mongols are involved in the transportation and distribution of cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine. They have maintained ties with Hispanic street gangs in Los Angeles and have been known to be traditional rivals of the Hells Angels. Today, they are allied with the Bandidos, Outlaws, Pagans, and Sons of Silence (DOJ).
- **The Bandidos** consist of approximately 2,000-2,500 members in the U.S. and 13 other countries; 900 members in 93 different chapters in the U.S. alone, they are one of the two largest motorcycle clubs. Involved in transportation and distribution of cocaine and marijuana, while also involved with production, transportation, and distribution of methamphetamine. Most active in Pacific, Southeastern, Southwestern, and West Central regions, they are also expanding to include subchapters of “puppet” or “duck” club members in these areas. These are members who have sworn allegiance to another club yet support the “dirty work” of the mother club (DOJ).
- **The Outlaws** consist of over 1,700 members in 176 chapters in the U.S. and 12 foreign countries. They are estimated to have 86 chapters in 20 states with over 700 members, and are most prevalent in the Great Lakes region. They also are identified as the American Outlaws Association (A.O.A.) and Outlaws Nation. Production, transportation, and distribution of methamphetamine as well as transportation and distribution of cocaine and marijuana (occasionally ecstasy) are most common. They also engage in activities such as assault, arson, explosives, extortion, fraud, homicide, robbery, laundering, prostitution, and others. They compete with Hells Angels for membership and territory (DOJ).
- **The Sons of Silence (SOSMC)** consist of about 250-275 members among 30 chapters in 12 states. Five chapters exist in Germany as well. They have been implicated in forms of intimidation, prostitution operations, motorcycle parts theft, weapons trafficking, money laundering, murder, and assault (DOJ).