

TEXAS GANG THREAT ASSESSMENT



(U) Texas Gang Threat Assessment

A State Intelligence Estimate

Produced by the 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

April 2014

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) Executive Summary

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

- (U) Gangs continue to represent a significant public safety threat to the State of Texas, and are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime in our communities. Of incarcerated members of Tier 1 and Tier 2 gangs, more than half are serving a sentence for a violent crime, including robbery (25 percent), homicide (13 percent), and assault/terroristic threat (15 percent).
- (U) The Tier 1 gangs in Texas are Tango Blast and Tango cliques (estimated >8,200 members), Texas Syndicate (>4,400 members), Texas Mexican Mafia (>5,500 members), and Barrio Azteca (>2,000 members). These organizations pose the greatest gang threat to Texas due to their relationships with Mexican cartels, large membership numbers, high levels of transnational criminal activity, and organizational effectiveness.
- (U) Texas-based gangs, gang members, and their associates are active in both human smuggling and human trafficking, which often includes sex trafficking and compelling prostitution of adult and minor victims. Gangs and gang members are attracted to the lucrative nature of this activity due to the potential for large and renewable profits and the perceived lower risk of detection. Gangs with access to alien smuggling organizations (ASOs) are often sought out to assist in the smuggling of illegal aliens into the United States. Gang members are involved in the human trafficking of both international and domestic victims.
- (U) Mexican cartels continue to engage in business relationships with Texas gangs in order to smuggle drugs, people, weapons, and cash across the border. Members of Tier 1 gangs have been recruited by the cartels to carry out acts of violence in both Texas and Mexico. The relationships between some gangs and cartels have evolved over the past year due in part to volatility and changes in cartel structures and relationships in Mexico.
- (U) The traditional rivalries between some gangs are decreasing as they take advantage of opportunities to work together to achieve common criminal objectives. For example, Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (ABT) members operated a drug ring with members of Houstone Tango Blast, in association with a Mexican cartel. Confirmed Crip members were also involved in criminal activity with the Houstone Tango Blast members.
- (U) We are also concerned about juveniles associated with transnational and Texas-based gangs who, in some cases, have familial connections to Mexican cartels, which facilitates their access to wholesale quantities of illegal drugs and exposes them to violent crime. This activity is especially concerning when it involves school-age children for the potential impact it could have on Texas schools.

(U) Table of Contents

Title Page	1
Executive Summary	2
Table of Contents	3
Acknowledgments	5
State Intelligence Estimates	6
Preface	7
Introduction	8
Prioritization and Criteria	9
Law Enforcement Strategies	13
<i>Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) Tactical Operations Center</i>	16
Regional Assessments	17
<i>Gang Activity in the Rio Grande Valley</i>	20
<i>Explaining the Growth of Sureño 13 in El Paso</i>	21
Gang Organization	22
<i>Differentiating Between Tango Blast and Tango Cliques</i>	24
Gang Relationships	25
<i>Changes in Traditional Gang Rivalries</i>	26
Gang Involvement in Criminal Activity	27
<i>Home Invasions in the Rio Grande Valley</i>	28
<i>Gang Involvement in Human Trafficking</i>	29
Outlook	30

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

Appendix 1: Overview of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Gangs 31

Appendix 2: Other Contributing Agencies 36

References..... 42

(U) Acknowledgments

(U) The 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 TxGang database. Contributing agencies are listed in Appendix 2.

(U) State Intelligence Estimates

(U) 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 current 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 to address current and evolving threats to the state.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(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.

(U) In addition to meeting these requirements, this threat assessment provides a broad overview of gang activity in Texas.

(U) Texas Penal Code §71.01 defines a criminal street 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 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 open-source reporting.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) Introduction

(U) This assessment updates the previous Texas Gang Threat Assessment released in April 2013, and serves as the annual evaluation of the gang threat in Texas. While many of the underlying trends and characteristics of gang activity have not changed substantially since last year, this report includes relevant updates and detailed information on several key aspects of gang activity.

(U) Quantitative information regarding gangs and gang activity is somewhat limited, and the available data is not necessarily comprehensive. For example, the number of gang members is dynamic, with gangs regularly seeking new recruits, and existing members traveling or moving. Some law enforcement agencies may vary in their reporting and awareness of gangs and indicators of gang activity. In addition, 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) Finally, 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 was directed to create the TxGang database to store multi-agency information on gangs, and it is working with its law enforcement partners to increase the level of participation.

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

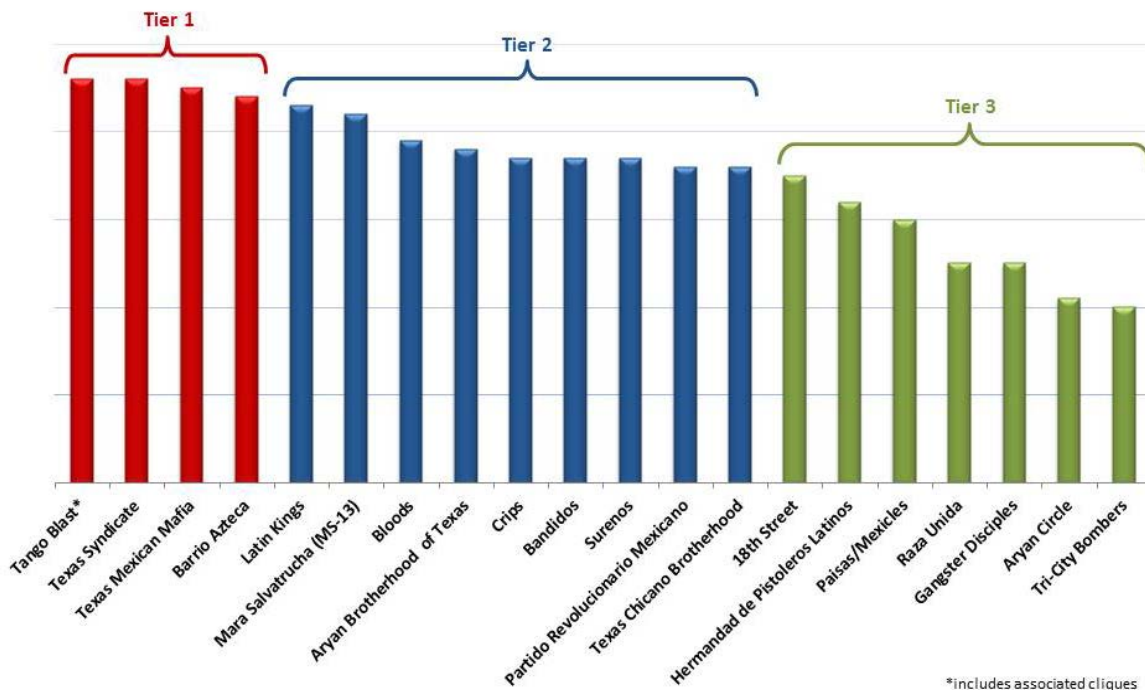
(U) The purpose of this assessment is to identify and evaluate the threat posed by gangs and gang-related crime in Texas by examining several key aspects of gang activity. The first section offers an explanation of the criteria and factors that the Joint Crime Information Center uses to assess the threat posed by an individual gang. The following sections examine law enforcement strategies, gang activity in various regions of the state, gang organizational issues, gang relationships, and an analysis of gang involvement in criminal activity. Finally, we present an outlook of gang activity in Texas.

(U) Prioritization and Criteria

(U) The Joint Crime Information Center uses a threat assessment matrix to evaluate the threat posed by individual gangs on a statewide level. This matrix includes 11 factors that are important in determining the threat posed by each gang. Each factor is rated using a weighted, point-based system in order to achieve a composite score. This score provides a measurement of the overall threat level of each gang. The most significant gangs are classified as Tier 1, with other significant gangs classified as Tier 2 and Tier 3. Considering that thousands of gangs have been identified in Texas, this threat assessment matrix is an essential tool in prioritizing the gangs that pose the greatest threat on a statewide scale.

(U) The rankings in Figure 1 show the threat posed by these gangs to the state as a whole. The gangs that constitute the greatest threat at a 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 represent a threat elsewhere. Some of the gangs listed in Figure 1 are composed of multiple cliques that adhere to a common culture and identity, though the individual cliques may operate somewhat autonomously. In addition, 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 2013 Gang Rankings



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

- (U) **Relationship with Cartels:** This factor examines the extent to which a gang is connected to Mexico-based drug cartels. A gang may be assessed as having no

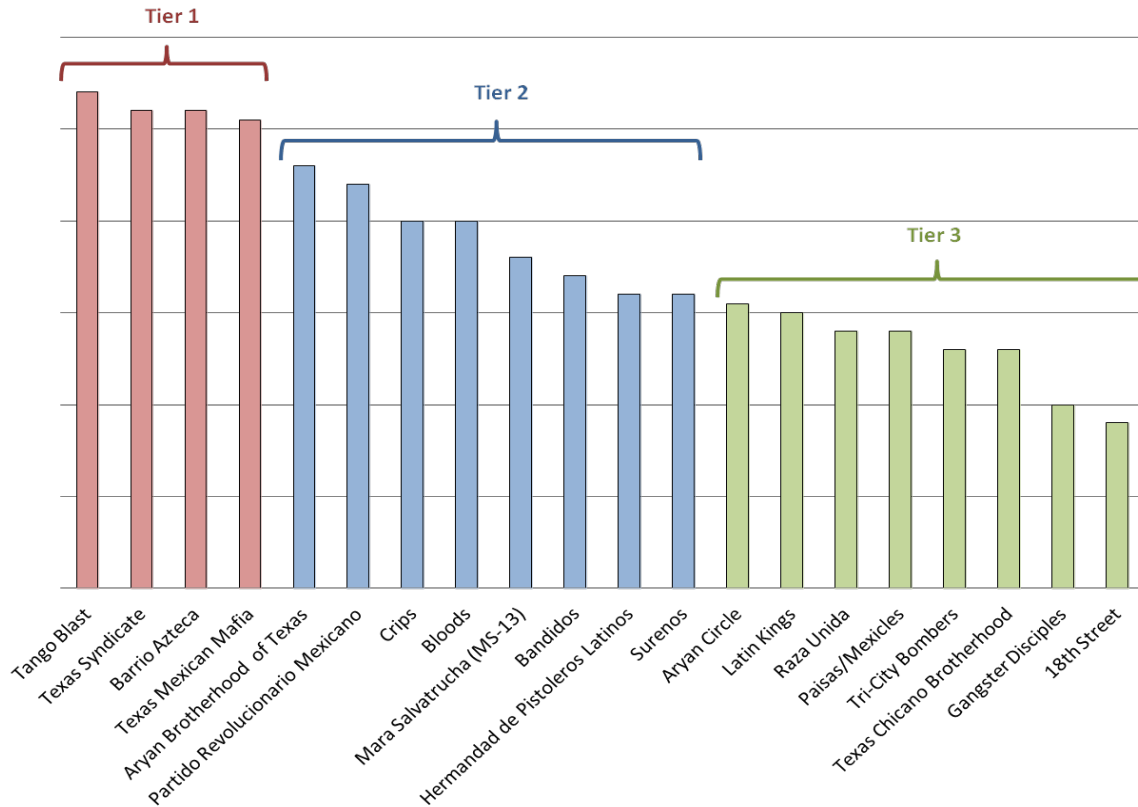
UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

- relationship, a temporary or short-term association, or a long-term business venture or exclusive relationship.
- **(U) Transnational Criminal Activity:** This factor considers whether a gang has transnational criminal connections, as well as whether the gang's criminal activity has spread into the transnational realm.
- **(U) Level of Criminal Activity:** This factor 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 felonies.
- **(U) Level of Violence:** This factor 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:** This factor 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:** This factor examines the nature of a gang's alliances and influence with other gangs. This may involve limited and temporary contact or formal alliances, or the direct oversight of some gangs by others.
- **(U) Total Strength:** This factor assesses the known size of the gang, measured by the number of individuals confirmed by law enforcement and criminal justice agencies to be members. This number is almost always an underrepresentation of the true size of the gang, as many members are unknown to law enforcement.
- **(U) Statewide Organizational Effectiveness:** This factor examines the gang's effectiveness in organizing members under its leadership across the state.
- **(U) Juvenile Membership:** This factor 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:** This factor 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:** This factor considers the gang's involvement in human smuggling and human trafficking activities.

(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. In addition, the criteria used to reach the 2013 rankings reflected in Figure 1 have been revised since 2012 and include one new factor: the gang's involvement in human smuggling and trafficking. Adding this factor and updating information regarding gang activity have resulted in changes from the 2012 gang rankings, which are shown in Figure 2.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) Figure 2: Joint Crime Information Center 2012 Gang Rankings



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

- (U) Tango Blast and Tango cliques, Texas Syndicate, Texas Mexican Mafia, and Barrio Azteca remain the Tier 1 gangs in Texas. These four Tier 1 gangs continue to pose the greatest gang threat to Texas due to their relationships with Mexican cartels, their transnational activity, number of members, high levels of criminal activity, and other significant factors.
- (U) Tango Blast and Tango cliques remain the greatest statewide gang threat, and are increasing in significance compared to other gangs. The gang continues to grow in membership both inside and outside the Texas prison system. Additionally the unique clique structure provides greater networking opportunities for criminal activity.
- (U) Bloods, Crips, Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (OMG), Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (ABT), and Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (PRM) remain Tier 2 gangs this year. Although these gangs vary in size and structure, they are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime across urban, suburban, and rural areas of Texas.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

- (U) The Latin Kings have a presence in many suburban and rural areas of Texas enabling them to engage significantly in the illicit drug market. Their connection with the Chicago-based Latin Kings provides them with advantages afforded by a national organization – a structure many of their peers lack. These combined elements make them a greater threat than in previous years, increasing their ranking to Tier 2.
- (U) The threat posed by Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) continues to increase due to their growing statewide and national presence, as well as their propensity for violence. For this reason, they have increased within the Tier 2 rankings.
- (U) An increase of Sureño 13 members into the El Paso and Rio Grande Valley areas has increased the gang's ranking within Tier 2. The Sureños' ranking is expected to increase in the future as more members migrate into Texas and continue to commit drug crimes.
- (U) The decrease in ranking of ABT and PRM since last year is a reflection of two components: successful law enforcement initiatives against both criminal organizations and the increasing threat of other criminal groups. They both, however, remain a criminal threat to state.
- (U) The Texas Chicano Brotherhood (TxCB) has moved from Tier 3 to Tier 2 this year, due to their established relationship with the Gulf Cartel and their level of transnational crimes, encompassing both weapons and drug smuggling. The Texas Chicano Brotherhood is also known to include juveniles in their criminal enterprises.
- (U) The Hermandad de Pistoleros Latinos' (HPL) ranking dropped this year due to the increasing threat of other criminal groups. There is no indication within law enforcement reporting that suggests the HPL increased in strength and criminal acts over the past year.

(U) Law Enforcement Strategies

(U) The multi-jurisdictional and ever-evolving threat posed by transnational organized crime requires a fully integrated approach to impact the most problematic gangs in Texas. It is essential to understand that transnational organized crime operates under no one specific structure: these organizations can vary from highly structured hierarchies, to family networks or clans, or loosely affiliated cells.

(U) To effectively reduce 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. In order to disrupt the gangs that have a more mercurial, cell-like structure, it is necessary to deploy a more fluid, proactive law enforcement initiative that targets the variety of criminal activities being committed. In order to combat the more traditional, hierarchically organized crime groups, it is necessary to conduct long-term, in-depth criminal enterprise investigations that target mid-level and senior gang leadership and their operational networks. This strategy includes the use of financial accountants to identify the financial structure of these transnational criminal organizations in order for law enforcement to more effectively seize their assets, sever their access to the financial system, and expose their criminal activities operating behind legitimate businesses.

(U) Working together from the onset of these investigations, investigators and prosecutors must continue to successfully exploit all available state and federal statutes that can aid in the successful prosecution of senior and mid-level leadership. For example, the use of Criminal Conspiracy (Texas Penal Code §15.02) applies aggregate amounts of evidence against all participants, which can be used to prosecute upper-level participants who have kept themselves at arm's length from criminal acts they have ordered. In addition, Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity (Texas Penal Code §71.02) provides prosecutors with a tool to enhance penalties for members of a criminal combination or criminal street gang.

(U) Multi-agency 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.

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

- (U) February 2013: Investigation of Texas Syndicate (TS) members in Corpus Christi for conspiracy to distribute controlled substances and a multitude of other federal crimes. As a result of the investigation, nine TS members and associates were indicted on federal drug violations, seven of whom were arrested during a roundup operation. Agents also executed multiple search warrants, resulting in the seizure of cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana, firearms, and more than \$25,000 in U.S. currency. Also participating in the investigation were the DEA, ATF, the IRS, and the Corpus Christi Police Department.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

- (U) February 2013: Investigation of Barrio Azteca (BA) members in El Paso for intimidating and extorting other criminals in order to collect a gang tax known as the “cuota.” As a result of this investigation, agents obtained 21 state arrest warrants on 6 targeted BA members and associates. Charges included Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity, Aggravated Robbery, Aggravated Assault, and Robbery. Three of the targeted suspects were arrested during a roundup operation, while the other three suspects remain at large. One additional suspect was arrested during the roundup on the same charges as the targeted suspects. Other agencies assisting with the operation were Homeland Security Investigations and the U.S. Marshals.
- (U) February 2013: A warrant roundup targeting 24 Tango clique gang members in the Corpus Christi area. The roundup was conducted after agents learned that the Corpitos Tango gang was planning to attempt to become the top drug distributors in the area after a recent law enforcement operation had weakened the Texas Syndicate’s presence. Agents served 13 felony warrants and a misdemeanor warrant, resulting in 14 arrests. Offenses included Parole Violation, Contempt of Court/Burglary of Vehicle, Assault, Larceny, and Possession of Marijuana. Six suspects are still at large in the Corpus Christi area, and four have possibly moved to different cities. Additional arrests stemming from this roundup are expected. The operation was conducted with the assistance of the DEA, the FBI, and the Corpus Christi Police Department.
- (U) February 2013: Arrest of an Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (ABT) “general” was part of an investigation that revealed alleged threats made against law enforcement following the recent indictment and arrest of numerous ABT members. Agents in Houston, Dallas, and Midland coordinated the investigation with the FBI and Homeland Security investigations, resulting in the seizure of methamphetamine from the suspect. Agents subsequently coordinated a traffic stop with the DPS Highway Patrol that led to a high-speed chase. The suspect was finally arrested after colliding with a patrol unit.
- (U) April 2013: Members and associates of the East Texas area Solid Wood Soldiers (SWS), a support group of the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (ABT) that is not tier-rated, were involved with the ABT in methamphetamine trafficking in East Texas. The criminal enterprise was purchasing pseudoephedrine to manufacture and distribute methamphetamine, and was also distributing “ice” methamphetamine from a source in Houston. CID agents identified the rank structure for the SWS and ABT in the area, and the gathered information was used to federally indict 12 suspects for Conspiracy to Manufacture Methamphetamine, 7 of whom were arrested during a round-up operation in March 2013. The remaining five indicted suspects, including the SWS president, were already in federal custody. Also participating in the investigation were DPS Aircraft, ATF, U.S. Attorney’s Office, U.S. Marshals, Hardin County Sheriff’s Office, and the Orange County Sheriff’s Office.
- (U) April 2013: Arrest of a “governor” for the Gangster Disciples street gang who was wanted for Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity in connection with a home-invasion robbery and the murder of a rival gang member in Killeen. The suspect was arrested while working at a construction site in Lubbock. Also participating in the arrest were the DPS Highway Patrol and the North Texas Fugitive Task Force.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

- (U) June 2013: Culmination of an Austin-area investigation targeting members and/or associates of the Tango Blast gang and the Caballeros Templarios Mexican drug cartel. Thirty-seven suspects were indicted and arrested for Possession with Intent to Distribute, Distribution of Heroin, Distribution of Methamphetamine, and Money Laundering. Agents also seized methamphetamine, heroin, weapons, vehicles, and \$55,000 in U.S. currency.
- (U) June 2013: Arrest of four members of the Texas Mexican Mafia in San Antonio on outstanding warrants, one of whom is suspected of being “captain of captains” for the organization. Two members were arrested on state probation revocation warrants, one was arrested for Felon in Possession of a Firearm, and the fourth was arrested for Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Three of the suspects are also believed to have been involved in an ongoing criminal investigation in the local area. During two of the arrests, agents also seized methamphetamine, cocaine, and additional firearms. The arrests were made in conjunction with the FBI Safe Street Task Force.
- (U) June 2013: Arrest of a Crips gang member for federal firearms violations. The suspect was also known to be involved in distributing drugs and trafficking firearms in the Houston area. During his arrest, the suspect gave agents consent to search his residence, resulting in the seizure of 5 handguns, a shotgun, an AR-15, an illegal knife, assorted ammunition, and a small number of ecstasy tablets. The arrest was made in conjunction with ATF.
- (U) June 2013: As a result of an investigation, 37 members and associates of the TMM operating in the Laredo area were indicted on June 11, 2013, for myriad offenses, including drug conspiracy, money laundering, extortion, and kidnapping. On June 20, law enforcement simultaneously executed 25 federal arrest warrants and two search warrants, resulting in the arrest of 24 suspects and the seizure of 4 vehicles, 2 motorcycles, a flatbed trailer, various firearms, and undetermined amounts of methamphetamine and marijuana. The other 13 indicted suspects were either already serving time in prison or remain at large.
- (U) August 2013: Execution of numerous federal search and arrest warrants as part of a multi-year investigation targeting a Houston Tango Blast cell that was a major supply chain for methamphetamine in the Houston area. As a result of the operation, seven of the eight targeted suspects were arrested, including the top three leadership positions. Agents also seized methamphetamine, 55 firearms, several thousand rounds of ammunition, 12 vehicles, 2 properties, and approximately \$44,686 in U.S. currency. Other agencies participating were the DEA, the FBI, ATF, the Harris County Sheriff’s Office, the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, and the Houston Police Department.
- (U) August 2013: As part of an investigation into the drug trafficking activities of the San Antonio-based Texas Mexican Mafia (TMM), information was developed that resulted in the traffic stop of a suspect vehicle by the San Antonio Police Department. It yielded the seizure of black tar heroin and the arrest of four suspects, including the driver, who was a TMM member. Information developed from the traffic stop also led to a consent search at an apartment in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), which resulted in the seizure of black tar heroin and a handgun. Assisting agencies included the San Antonio Police Department.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

- (U) October 2013: Conclusion of a 16-month-long investigation targeting several operational cells of the Barrio Azteca (BA). As a result of the investigation, 26 BA members and associates were indicted for Engaging in Organized Crime and Conspiracy to Manufacture/Deliver Cocaine. Agents from the El Paso area subsequently conducted an arrest round-up that resulted in the arrest of five BA members and 20 associates. Agents also seized marijuana, cocaine, various containers of hydrocodone and steroids, 2 knives, and \$1,882 in U.S. currency. Also participating in the investigation were the DEA, HSI, the FBI, the U.S. Marshals, the U.S. Border Patrol, the U.S. Attorney's Office, TABC, the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, the El Paso County DA's Office, the El Paso Police Department, and the Socorro Police Department.

(U) *Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) Tactical Operations Center*

(U) The Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) Tactical Operations Center in Houston serves as the unified headquarters for an estimated 75-100 of the region's most knowledgeable and experienced federal, state, and local anti-gang investigators, analysts, and prosecutors.

(U) The Center comprises various law enforcement agencies, including the Texas Department of Public Safety, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the DEA, ATF, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Houston Police Department, the Harris County Sheriff's Office, other county sheriffs and constable offices throughout the region, and the Harris County District Attorney's Office, among others.

(U) The Center implements an innovative approach to fighting violent criminal gangs – and the transnational criminal organizations with which they are increasingly allied – by using:

(U) Full-time, on-site support from the District Attorney's Office to assist with rapid authorization of warrants provide legal guidance to law enforcement while investigations are ongoing, strengthen cases for eventual prosecution, and expedite the filing of criminal charges;

(U) Centralized staff, which avoids interagency redundancies and facilitate secure access to a wide-range of disparate law enforcement databases; and

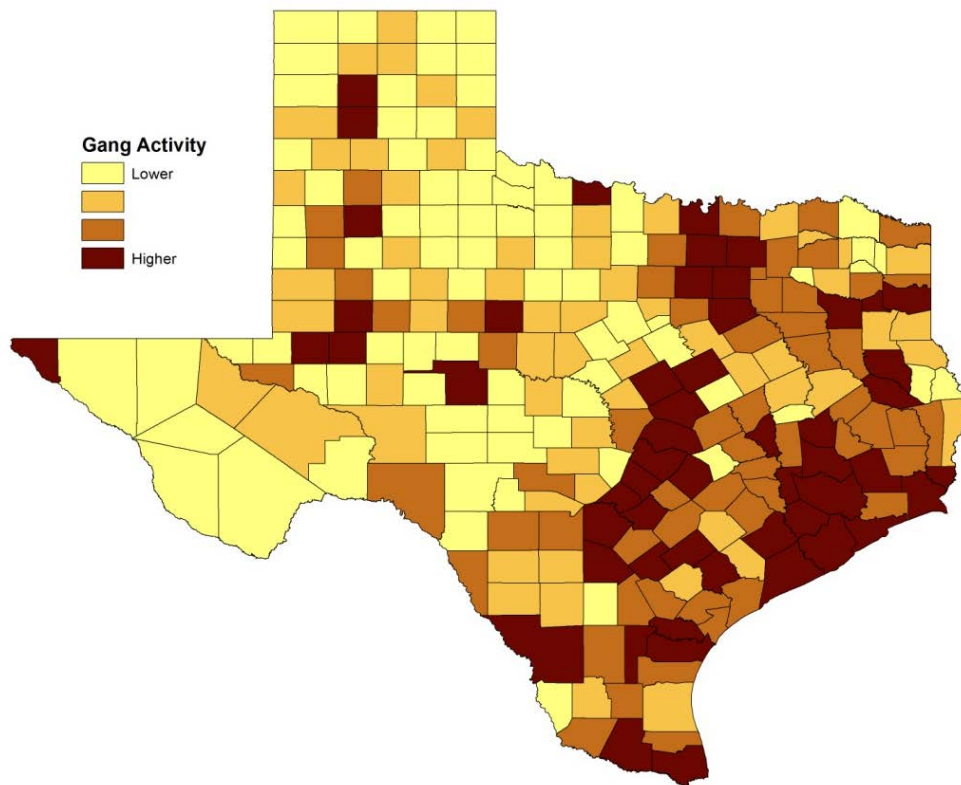
(U) Specialists in electronic forensics, data recovery, and foreign languages (particularly concerning special-interest countries) who are readily available to all law enforcement agencies across the region.

(U) Regional Assessments

(U) Although there are challenges associated with quantitatively measuring all gang activity, we continue to assess that the number of gang members in Texas currently may exceed 100,000. This estimate is consistent with available information on gang membership nationally and within Texas. The National Gang Intelligence Center, for example, estimated in 2011 that there are 1.4 million gang members nationwide – a 40-percent increase from 2009.^{1,2}

(U) More than 4,600 gangs have been identified in Texas, though it is unknown how many of these are currently active. These range from small gangs composed of few members with limited geographic reach to large gangs with thousands of members active throughout Texas and elsewhere.

(U) *Figure 3: Concentration of Gang Activity in Texas³*

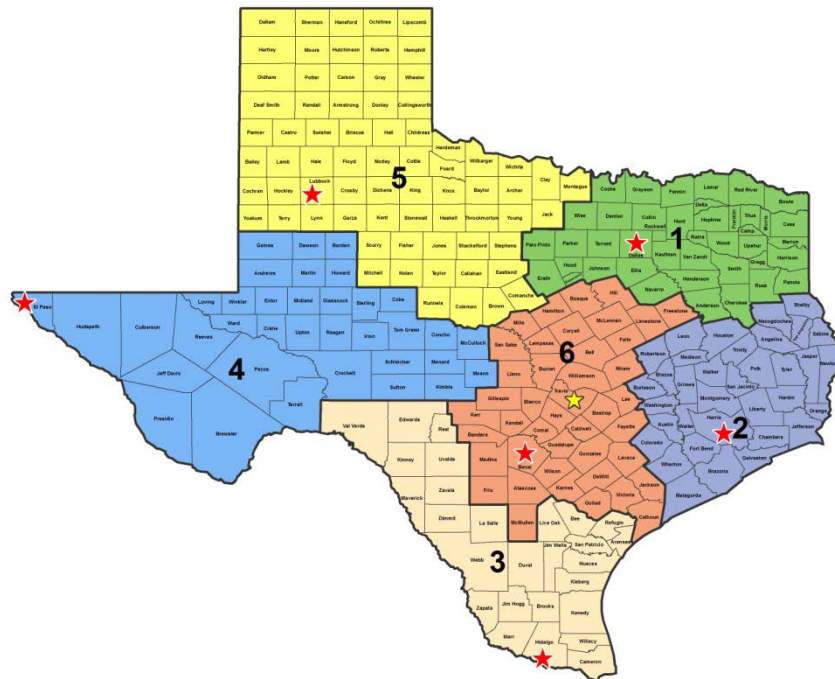


(U) Gang activity remains widespread throughout all regions of Texas. While the greatest concentrations of gang activity tend to be in larger metropolitan areas, gang members are also present in suburban areas, smaller cities, and rural areas. Gang activity is also prevalent in the Texas counties adjacent to Mexico and along the key smuggling corridors, since Texas-based gangs are used for cross-border smuggling and trafficking in the state. Many transnational gangs operating in Texas – such as Sureño 13, Barrio Azteca, MS-13, and others – engage in criminal activity in Mexico as well as in Texas and elsewhere. Figure 3 provides an overview of where gang activity is concentrated in Texas.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) In addition to being widespread, gang activity also varies among Texas DPS regions (*see Figure 4*). Many smaller gangs operate in limited areas of the state. For example, the gangs that are most active in the Texas Panhandle may not be the most significant gangs operating in the Rio Grande Valley. On the other hand, several of the largest and most significant gangs are present across multiple DPS regions.

(U) *Figure 4: Texas DPS Regions*



(U) The following summaries provide an assessment of the most significant gangs operating in various regions of Texas. Some of the most significant gangs at a regional level are not necessarily the most significant at a statewide level. In addition, a gang’s prevalence throughout Texas is only one of the factors used to assess its overall threat. Moreover, law enforcement continues to investigate significant gangs, completing several operations successful in the arrest and prosecution of high-level gang leaders and members. These efforts may result in some changes to the most significant gangs by region during the next assessment period.

(U) **Region 1 Most Significant Gangs:** Tango Blast (D-Town, Foritos), Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, and Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang

- (U) Region 1 includes the counties in northeastern Texas, with Dallas-Fort Worth representing the most densely populated area. Tango Blast maintains a heavy presence in Dallas-Fort Worth, and is largely concentrated in the central and western counties in the region. The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas is active in and around the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Law enforcement agencies around the region have reported the presence of other gangs such as the Texas Syndicate, Texas Mexican Mafia, Crips (various cliques), Bloods (various cliques), Sureño 13, Aryan Circle, Latin Kings, and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13).

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) **Region 2 Most Significant Gangs:** Tango Blast (Houstone), Texas Mexican Mafia, and Aryan Brotherhood of Texas

- (U) Region 2 is composed of counties in the eastern and southeastern portion of Texas, including the metropolitan areas of Houston, Beaumont, and Bryan-College Station. The Houston area Tango Blast clique, the Houstone, is the largest gang in Houston and the surrounding areas, followed by the Texas Mexican Mafia. The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas is significant due to its strong presence throughout the entire region. Other gangs reported by law enforcement in Region 2 are the Texas Syndicate, Crips (various cliques), Bloods (various cliques), Bandidos, Sureño 13, Aryan Circle, Latin Kings, the Gangster Disciples, and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13).

(U) **Region 3 Most Significant Gangs:** Tango cliques (Corpitos, Vallucos), Texas Syndicate, and Texas Mexican Mafia

- (U) The southern counties of Texas make up Region 3, including a large stretch of the Mexican border. Tango cliques in Corpus Christi (Corpitos) and the Rio Grande Valley (Vallucos), the Texas Syndicate, and the Texas Mexican Mafia are the large and well-established gangs in the region. The Hermandad de Pistoleros Latinos, Partido Revolucionario Mexicano, and the Paisas/Mexicles are also very prominent gangs active in the region. The Tri-City Bombers and Texas Chicano Brotherhood are emerging with increased significance in the Rio Grande Valley area. Other gangs represented in the region are the Bandidos, Sureño 13, and Latin Kings.

(U) **Region 4 Most Significant Gangs:** Barrio Azteca, Sureño 13, and Tango cliques (EPT, WTX)

- (U) Region 4 encompasses west Texas and shares a significant portion of the U.S. border with Mexico. The most significant gang in the region is Barrio Azteca, which arose in the El Paso area and has spread to other regions of the state. Other significant gangs active throughout the region are the California-based Sureño 13 and the Tango cliques known as WTX (West Texas) and EPT (El Paso). The Aryan Brotherhood of Texas and Aryan Circle are also active in the Midland-Odessa and San Angelo areas. Other noteworthy gangs are the Texas Syndicate, Texas Mexican Mafia, Crips (various cliques), Bloods (various cliques), Bandidos, and Latin Kings.

(U) **Region 5 Most Significant Gangs:** Tango clique (WTX), Texas Syndicate, and Aryan Brotherhood of Texas

- (U) Region 5 includes the counties in the north and panhandle of Texas. The most significant gangs are the West Texas Tangos (WTX), the Texas Syndicate, and the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, as they have a large presence throughout the region. Other gangs reported by law enforcement are Barrio Azteca, the Texas Mexican Mafia, Partido Revolucionario Mexicano, Crips (various cliques), Bloods (various cliques), Bandidos, Sureño 13, and Aryan Circle.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) Region 6 Most Significant Gangs: Texas Mexican Mafia, Texas Syndicate, Tango Blast (ATX) and Tango clique (Orejones)

- (U) Region 6 is made up of central Texas and several counties to the southeast, which are home to a few of the state's most established gangs. The most significant gangs are Texas Mexican Mafia, Texas Syndicate, and Tango Blast Austin (ATX) and Tango clique San Antonio (Orejones). Other significant gangs found in this region include the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, Crips (various cliques), Bloods (various cliques), Bandidos, Hermandad de Pistoleros Latinos, Sureño 13, Aryan Circle, Latin Kings, and Gangster Disciples.

(U) Gang Activity in the Rio Grande Valley

(U) The Texas Rio Grande Valley area (RGV) is susceptible to both Mexican cartel influence and high levels of gang activity due to its proximity to the Mexico border. Although the RGV is a relatively small geographic region, crimes committed in this area – specifically drug trafficking – affect the entire nation since drug shipments are often destined for other cities and states. An evaluation of gang encounters and arrest data from local and federal law enforcement agencies identifies the most problematic gangs in the RGV and the crimes they commit.^{4,5}

(U) Over 35 gangs are identified operating in the RGV. The most criminally active of these gangs is the Vallucos, a Tango clique based in the RGV area. Vallucos overwhelmingly account for the largest number of gang arrests and encounters in the RGV region, including the transnational crimes of alien smuggling and drug trafficking, as well as burglary, theft, and robbery. Overall, Valluco gang members account for almost 45 percent of all reported gang arrests in the RGV.

(U) Other gangs with significant rates of criminal activity in the RGV are Sureño 13, the Texas Chicano Brotherhood, the Latin Kings, and the Tri-City Bombers. Along with the Vallucos, these gangs constitute approximately 65 percent of reported gang arrests in the RGV area. The Mexico-based Paisas are significantly active in alien smuggling and drug trafficking, but less so in the crimes such as burglary, theft, and robbery. Another Mexico-based gang, Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (PRM), is also active in transnational crimes. Outside of the Vallucos, Paisas, Sureño 13, and the Texas Chicano Brotherhood are responsible for a significant amount of drug trafficking in the RGV.

(U) *Explaining the Growth of Sureño 13 in El Paso*

(U) A series of unique events positions California's Sureño 13 street gang as one of the most criminally viable gangs in El Paso, Texas. An examination of the events preceding this outcome identifies three reasons that explain how a California-based gang is now one of El Paso's most significant threats, and the implications for Texas in the future.

(U) ***Sureño 13 members relocated to avoid California's "Three Strikes Law."*** In 1994, California enacted the Three Strikes Law as part of their criminal justice sentencing program. Though several states, including Texas, have similar laws, California's original law mandated that any offender previously convicted of two felonies must serve a 25-year-to-life sentence on any new felony conviction, including non-serious crimes.⁶ Since then, California has amended the rule. As a result of the original law, Sureño gang members with criminal records moved out of California hoping to avoid lengthy prison sentences in California. Other reasons for migrating include California mandates prohibiting gang associations, family ties in El Paso, and employment opportunities. According to data from El Paso law enforcement agencies, the Sureños are now the second largest and the second most criminally active gang in El Paso, behind the Barrio Azteca.⁷

(U) ***The Sinaloa Cartel expanded opportunities for Sureño 13 to operate in El Paso.*** In early 2008, the Sinaloa Cartel moved into Juarez in hopes of taking control away from the Juarez Cartel. A bloody war ensued between the two cartels for approximately three years, with the Sinaloa Cartel reportedly emerging as the winner. The Sinaloa Cartel gained control of the drug plaza, but had no massive amount of support personnel in El Paso to move contraband. To remedy this shortfall, the cartel turned to the Sureño 13, the "backbone, muscle, and voice" of the California Mexican Mafia – already a longstanding client and trusted ally of the cartel.⁸

(U) ***Barrio Azteca's reduced role in El Paso gave Sureño 13 operational opportunity.*** The decline of the Juarez Cartel affects El Paso significantly. The cartel developed an almost exclusive relationship with Barrio Azteca in Juarez to help facilitate the smuggling and distribution of drugs through El Paso. In El Paso, Barrio Azteca's local knowledge and strength in numbers made them the dominant gang in the region. When the Sinaloa Cartel reduced the Juarez Cartel's effectiveness in Juarez, Barrio Azteca's effectiveness in El Paso also weakened, and opened criminal opportunity for Sureño 13. In addition, Barrio Azteca has been plagued with infighting and power struggles as law enforcement heavily targets the gang, severing the leadership channels and reducing their numbers on the street.⁹

(U) ***Outlook:*** Monitoring the experience of Sureño 13 and Barrio Azteca in El Paso can provide insight and implications for Texas in the future. Despite the increases of Sureño 13 in El Paso, Barrio Azteca remains the dominant gang in the area. Their members have developed deep networks and contacts on both sides of the border to ensure that they still have a role in drug trafficking, and some members have already been identified as working for the Sinaloa Cartel. Law enforcement should recognize that if the Sinaloa Cartel continues winning trafficking corridors, even after the arrest of Sinaloa Cartel kingpin Joaquin "Chapo" Guzman, there may be corresponding movement and increased strength in Sureño 13 across Texas.

(U) Gang Organization

(U) Gangs in Texas continue to employ a variety of organizational and leadership models. These models vary in the extent to which the organization is centrally or hierarchically organized. Although the various models are unique, one is not necessarily more effective than another. Several of the Tier 1 gangs, for example, use different organizational models. These models are:

(U) **Paramilitary** models include a hierarchical structure with clear distinction between ranks, which often include military titles such as general, captain, lieutenant, sergeant and soldier. Senior leaders are able to issue orders to subordinates that are generally carried out as instructed. Gangs using this model include Texas Mexican Mafia and Barrio Azteca.

(U) **Regional Cell** models are composed of several cells that are part of the same organization, but that act generally independent of one another at an operational level. Each cell may have a strict internal hierarchy similar to a paramilitary model, even though between cells there is little coordinated command and control. Texas Syndicate is an example of a Texas gang 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 Bloods, Crips, and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13).

(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 groups of members can be effectively managed. Tango Blast is an example of a Texas gang with a loose affiliation model.

(U) In addition to organizational and leadership models, other factors play an important role in how gangs operate and organize.

(U) *Race and Gangs*

(U) Many large gangs have membership based along racial lines. 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 African-American gangs include the Gangster Disciples, the Bloods, and the Crips. This aspect of gang organization is often described as a product of prison, where inmates may identify with others of their own race. Many of these gangs officially cite race as a reason for having organized, and some profess racial superiority over others. While individual members of these gangs may hold racial bias or prejudice, the gangs themselves often engage in business arrangements with gangs of another race when it is mutually convenient and profitable. Ultimately, gangs work with any group that will help further their criminal objectives.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) Females and Gangs

(U) The majority of gang members in Texas are males. Females are estimated to account for between 10 and 20 percent of gang membership. Most females with gang affiliation serve in support roles, not as members: there are few gangs that allow females to serve as associates. The Latin Kings, for example, allows its females to serve as Latin Queens, who are considered part of the gang but do not have the same rights as the male members. However, females are continually moving from their support roles to more operational roles in gangs' criminal activities.

(U) Gang Recruitment and Identification

(U) Gangs continue to recruit members in prisons, in schools, on the Internet, from smaller gangs, and from within their own families. The prison system and county jails continue to offer opportunities for the recruitment of inmates, who may join prison gangs for protection while serving time behind bars. Several prison gangs recruit for the sole purpose of having a majority population in order to defend against other gangs. Once members are recruited, most gangs require them to serve the gang for life, though other gangs allow members to leave after being released from prison. Some members of prison gangs have encouraged their children not to follow in their footsteps, but to instead join gangs with looser affiliation rules, such as Tango Blast.

(U) Some gangs in Texas are recruiting juveniles in neighborhoods and schools, often making promises of money, fame, and influence, while promising them that they will receive a minimal sentence if they are arrested and charged with an offense. Juvenile gang activity appears to occur disproportionately along the Texas–Mexico border. For example, the 14 Texas counties that are adjacent to Mexico represent approximately 9.7 percent of the Texas population, yet in 2013, these counties accounted for 18.9 percent of felony referrals of juveniles with confirmed gang affiliation, and 13 percent of other referrals of juveniles with confirmed gang affiliation.¹⁰

(U) Large gangs in Texas are also increasingly recruiting smaller gangs to commit crimes on their behalf. Smaller gangs, for example, may be recruited to steal vehicles that the large gang will use itself or send to Mexico to be used by Mexican cartels.

(U) Gang members use several things to identify their affiliations, including tattoos, hand signals, colors, and graffiti. Most gangs tend to use one or several standard symbols that can be 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, Aryan Brotherhood of Texas uses the numbers "12" to represent the first and second letter of the alphabet, "AB." Other gangs use the telephone area code of their hometown. While some gangs continue to display tattoos and insignia that conspicuously show affiliation with the gang, others conceal the symbols within other tattoos.

(U) Hand signals and the wearing of similar colors also serve as ways for gang members to identify each other. Some of these signals and colors are similar across gangs, while others are unique. Graffiti is another common way for gangs to identify themselves and the territory that

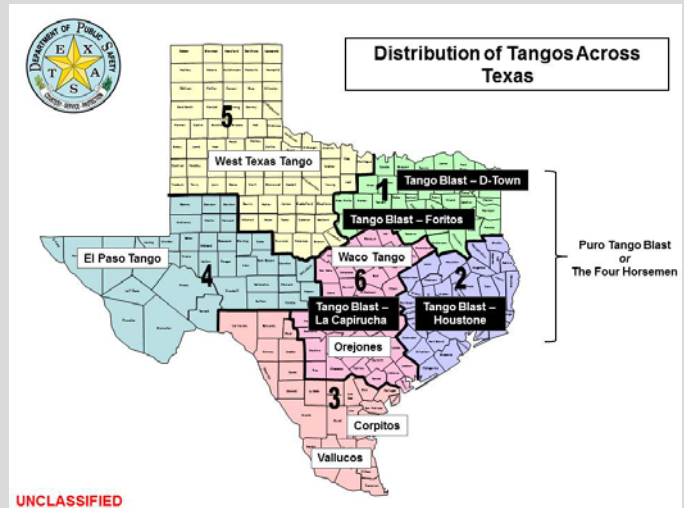
UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

they claim. Messages that are etched or spray-painted on buildings or street signs may serve as a message from one gang to another regarding the boundaries of its turf.

(U) Differentiating Between Tango Blast and Tango Cliques

(U) The rapid expansion of Tango Blast and Tango cliques in Texas necessitates an examination of the various types of Tangos across the state. While all Tango cliques have traditionally been categorized under the “Tango Blast” moniker, a more nuanced approach differentiates between the original four Tangos and the more recent cliques, such as the Vallucos or the Orejones.

(U) Tangos were first established by inmates from Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin. These original Tangos collectively came to be known as the Four Horsemen and still band together for protection in the correctional setting. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice designates the Four Horsemen as “Puro Tango Blast.” The origins of “Blast” refers to the individual representing his tango or hometown – members state they are “blasting” when actively involved with the prison gang, often in a criminal manner.



(U) As the concept evolved, more Tangos were established in various regions throughout the state and in various correctional settings. While each of these newer Tangos are not always directly affiliated with Puro Tango Blast, they generally adhere to a common culture and should still be recognized as part of the larger Tango umbrella. Some of the newer Tango cliques, such as Vallucos and Orejones, do occasionally align themselves with Puro Tango Blast in the correctional setting if it is in their favor.

(U) The distinctions between Tangos have implications for law enforcement. The fluid and loose nature of association among Tango cliques suggests they are more of a franchise which operates based on the personal relationships of their members rather than a hierarchical organization where decisions are made based on a set of strict rules. The unique qualities of Tango cliques allows for greater flexibility with regard to associations with other criminal groups and gangs.

(U) Gang Relationships

(U) Relationships between gangs are unavoidable, given the areas in which gangs operate, their large membership numbers, and the nature of the criminal activity in which they are involved. These relationships range from alliances between gangs for mutual protection and profit to bitter rivalries between gangs that result in inter-gang violence.

(U) One of the most serious issues facing law enforcement and public safety officials is the fact that many gangs have developed relationships with Mexican cartels. Gangs that work with Mexican cartels are involved in a level of crime that affects the entire state. Their criminal activity is not just a problem for specific cities or regions. All Tier 1 gangs and most Tier 2 gangs are connected to the cartels. In certain instances, these gangs are contracted to commit assassinations, kidnappings, and assaults in Texas and Mexico on behalf of the cartels.

(U) The strong relationships formed between gangs and cartels help gangs increase their resources and profitability with greater access to wholesale quantities of drugs, while the cartels benefit from expanding their distribution networks and gaining access to criminal labor. From a public safety perspective, as these relationships strengthen, so does the threat to the public and the law enforcement officials sworn to protect them.

(U) There is some variation in the nature of the Texas gangs' relationship with Mexican cartels. On one end of the spectrum, a gang may interact only sporadically with Mexican cartels. In these cases, the gang has no allegiance to any particular cartel, and may work with a variety of Mexican organizations. These tend to be smaller gangs that do not need a regular supply of large quantities of drugs. Despite the irregular contact, each interaction has the potential to strengthen the connection between the cartel and the gang, increasing the likelihood that the relationship will increase.

(U) On the other end of the spectrum, and unique to Texas, is a gang that serves as a U.S.-based extension of a cartel. The U.S. gang members regularly take orders from cartel leadership; facilitate the movement of people and drugs into the United States; procure weapons, vehicles and other material for the cartel; and carry out acts of violence and other criminal activity on the cartel's behalf. This type of relationship represents the most significant threat, as it involves an ongoing exportation of Mexican cartel influence to the state. Of the significant gangs examined in this assessment, Barrio Azteca has historically had the strongest and most entrenched relationship with a Mexican cartel.

(U) Between these two extremes are several large Texas-based gangs that have long-standing working relationships with Mexican cartels. In most cases, these relationships strengthen when the interests of the two organizations coincide; when they do not, there is no guarantee that the gang will comply with a request from the cartel.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) *Changes in Traditional Gang Rivalries*

(U) One of the defining characteristics of gangs is the use of violence to claim territory, maintain power, and further economic and social goals. The formation of gang rivalries can help galvanize members and increases their commitment to the gang; however, violent acts also draw the attention of law enforcement, diminishing profitability. In some cases, traditional rivalries have diminished as groups begin to work together, changing the dynamic within prison and in the free world.

(U) As a gang grows into a state-wide criminal organization, its structure and focus can change to a business-like model, allowing for greater collaboration between its members and outside forces. Often, Mexican cartels ally with several criminal gangs to maximize drug distribution. Following that process, the gangs continue to ease rivalries and generate new illicit business opportunities.

(U) For example, Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (ABT) members operated a drug ring with members of Houstone Tango Blast, in association with a Mexican cartel. Confirmed Crip members were also involved in criminal activity with the Houstone Tango Blast.

(U) Various Texas gangs have settled traditional differences to further their economic goals. For example, Tango Blast members now have transactional relationships with several gangs, including formal rivals. More established criminal groups, such as TS, originally responded to Tango members with aggression as Tangos grew in strength and criminal activity.¹¹

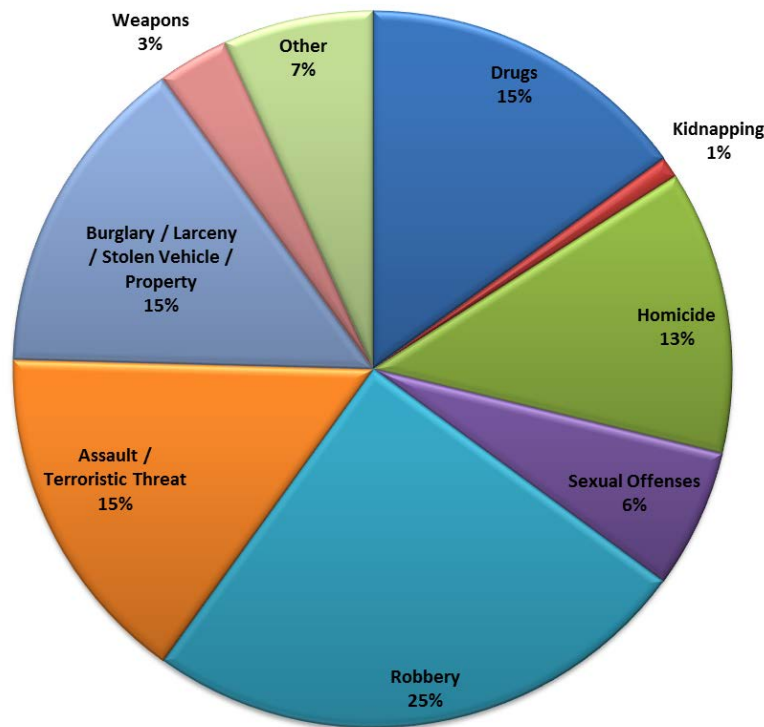
(U) The historically antagonistic relationship between Bloods and Crips has improved recently, as evidenced by cliques from both gangs working together for mutual benefit. The easing of traditional gang rivalries affords gang members greater operational freedom. Members can maintain connections with friends and associates who may be aligned with other gangs. This reduces the incidence of inter-gang violence, while increasing collaboration in gang operations.

(U) Gang Involvement in Criminal Activity

(U) Gangs in Texas continue to engage in a wide variety of criminal activities. These range from non-violent property crimes, such as vandalism, to brutal violent crimes, such as murder and kidnapping. The overall extent of this activity is difficult to measure with great accuracy, though gangs are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime in Texas. The 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment, for example, reported that gangs may be responsible for as much as 60 percent of all criminal activity in some communities,¹² while the 2011 National Gang Threat Assessment stated that some jurisdictions in Texas and other states reported that gangs are responsible for more than 90 percent of crime.¹³

(U) A good indication of the level of violence associated with gang activity is shown in Figure 5, which represents the offense of record for Tier 1 and Tier 2 prison gang members incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The offense of record is the offense that incarcerates the offender for the longest period of time. The figure shows that more than half of prison gang members associated with Tier 1 and Tier 2 gangs are serving a sentence for a violent crime, including robbery (25 percent), homicide (13 percent), and assault/terroristic threat (15 percent). Other significant categories include drug-related offenses (15 percent), burglary/larceny (15 percent), sexual offenses (6 percent), and weapon-related offenses (3 percent).

(U) *Figure 5: Offense of Record for Incarcerated Tier 1 and Tier 2 Gang Members in Texas Prisons¹⁴*



(U) The fact that many prison gang members have committed multiple offenses may account for the relatively low numbers of other crimes in Figure 5. For example, a gang member who had committed both a kidnapping and a murder, and received a longer sentence for the murder,

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

would not register in the kidnapping category. In addition, the data does not show whether the offender committed the offense as a gang member or became a gang member after becoming incarcerated. Furthermore, these offenses are not always an accurate representation of the crime that was actually committed; they may reflect a lesser charge resulting from a plea bargain. Regardless, this information underscores a simple reality: gang members in Texas are dangerous criminals responsible for violent and heinous crimes.

(U) Gang Involvement in Home Invasions in the Rio Grande Valley

(U) Members and associates of multiple gangs are part of several criminal networks that have carried out home invasion robberies in the Rio Grande Valley area over the past several years. These crimes typically target homes used to conceal and warehouse smuggled contraband (stash houses), which present attractive targets for criminals interested in stealing such high value illicit commodities as drugs, weapons, and bulk cash.

(U) Home invasion network leaders organize ad hoc crews for specific jobs, assembling them from a pool of associates. These crews often include gang members, though gang members are brought on board based not on gang affiliation, but on their personal association with members of the home invasion network. Therefore, members of different gangs can work on the same crew. In many cases, these crimes are not gang-related or gang-directed; the gang connection is incidental.

(U) Home invasion crews, in a few cases, have used police uniform items or badges to impersonate police officers when conducting their home invasions. The very nature of a home invasion robbery requires the threat or use of force, often with weapons. Robbers used firearms in the majority of documented home invasions, leading to shootings in a small numbers of cases, including several murders.

(U) We are concerned about the violent and aggressive tactics used in these incidents, including several shootings and fatalities in early 2014. The involvement of gang members in these home invasion networks provides a further example of the criminal activity in which gang members are involved. In addition, it underscores the extent to which gang members can work with members of other gangs in the pursuit of shared criminal goals.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) *Gang Involvement in Human Trafficking*

(U) Multiple gangs in Texas and elsewhere in the U.S. are currently engaged in sex trafficking and compelling prostitution. Individual gang members also engage in this activity, possibly independent of the operations of the gang. Gangs have expanded into the trafficking of minors and adults due to the potential for high, renewable profit and a perceived low risk of detection. Gang members frequently recruit victims through false promises of wealth and affection, but continuously compel their victims through force, fraud or coercion.

(U) Multiple gangs in Texas have been reported to be involved in human trafficking, including Barrio Azteca, Black Gangster Disciples, Bloods, Crips, MS-13, Sureños, and Tango Blast. Human trafficking includes the exploitation of victims for both commercial sex and forced labor purposes, although reporting of gang involvement in labor trafficking in Texas is limited.

(U) In 2011, a ranking member of the 59 Bounty Hunters, Houston's largest Bloods subset, was convicted of sexually assaulting a 16-year-old runaway. The subject allegedly ran a \$10,000-per-night prostitution ring of 5-10 young females at a time and recruited teens from North Shore High School.¹⁵

(U) We are also concerned about the involvement of gang members and gang associates in alien smuggling organizations (ASOs) operating along the Texas-Mexico border. Although human smuggling is distinct from human trafficking, there is often substantial overlap. In some cases, human smugglers have been hired to transport sex trafficking victims. In many other instances, crimes that initially begin as human smuggling evolve into human trafficking or a related crime: illegal aliens who voluntarily enter into an agreement with an ASO ultimately are kidnapped, moved or held against their will, assaulted, or otherwise exploited, which renders the traditional smuggling-trafficking distinction misleading. Gangs connected with ASOs or otherwise involved in human smuggling in Texas include Tango Blast, Texas Syndicate, Barrio Azteca, Texas Mexican Mafia, MS-13, and others.

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) Outlook

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

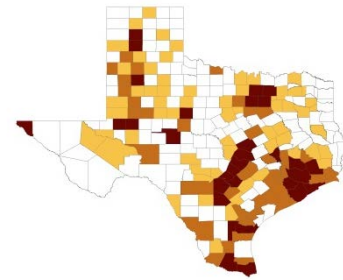
- (U) We expect the overall gang threat in Texas will remain high during the coming year, given previous estimated increases in overall gang membership in Texas and elsewhere in the United States. The gangs working directly with the Mexican cartels will continue to represent a particular threat to the state.
- (U) The threat posed by individual gangs will change over time. Although changes in gang leadership and the impact of law enforcement action will have an effect on a gang's ability to operate effectively, many of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 gangs will continue to constitute significant threats to Texas due to their large membership numbers, relationships with cartels, high levels of transnational criminal activity, and other factors.
- (U) Mexican drug cartels will 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, and the cartels will likely seek to expand their existing networks in Texas by leveraging the 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) While many Tier 1 and Tier 2 gangs currently conduct human trafficking operations in Texas, we assess other Texas gangs have and will continue to operate in human trafficking due to the potential for large and renewable profits, and the assumed low risk of detection by law enforcement.

(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. Also included are maps 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.

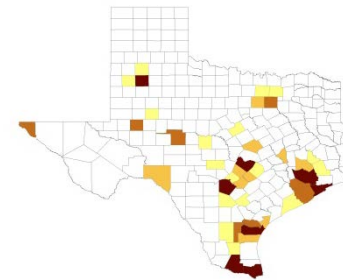
(U) Tier 1: Tango Blast and Tango Cliques

(U) Tango Blast and Tango cliques are located in many major cities across Texas. Tango Blast first developed as a self-protection group against more established prison gangs, such as Texas Mexican Mafia and Texas Syndicate. The gang has grown rapidly and boasts the highest membership numbers among prison gangs in Texas. Due to the rapid growth of Tango Blast and Tango cliques, as well as its high level of criminal activity, propensity for violence, and relationships with Mexican cartels, the gang poses a significant threat to Texas.



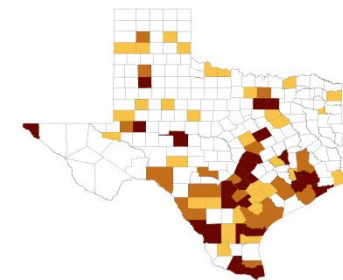
(U) Tier 1: Texas Syndicate

(U) Texas Syndicate (TS) is a violent prison gang that originated in the California penal system over 40 years ago. Texas Syndicate moved into Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) prisons and onto the streets, often working with Mexican cartels such as Los Zetas. Recent law enforcement investigations targeting the gang have resulted in the arrest of high-ranking members, dismantling top leadership positions within each of TS's regional hierarchies. Texas Syndicate remains a resilient criminal threat to Texas.



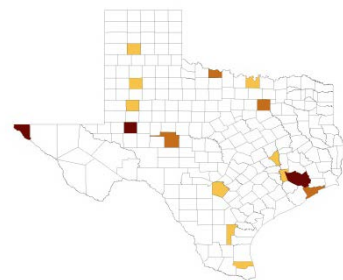
(U) Tier 1: Texas Mexican Mafia

(U) Despite having its threat level downgraded in 2012 because of significant law enforcement targeting, Texas Mexican Mafia (TMM) has upheld its membership size, commitment to prosper from the sale and distribution of firearms and illicit drugs, and involvement in violent crimes. TMM will likely continue to remain organizationally effective and engage in criminal activity.



(U) Tier 1: Barrio Azteca

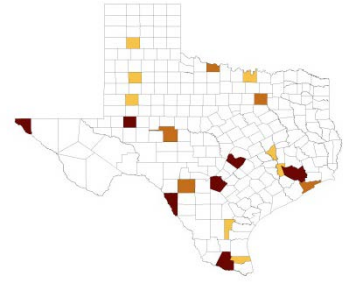
(U) Barrio Azteca (BA) has lost much of its support in the last year due to the deteriorating influence of the Juarez Cartel. In addition, law enforcement efforts have been successful in targeting the gang. Although predominantly located in El Paso and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, arrests of BA members have been active in Wichita Falls and Houston.



UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

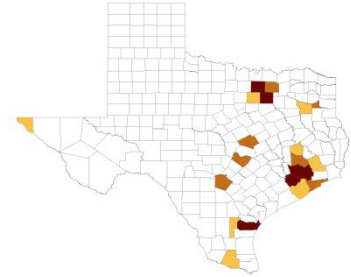
(U) Tier 2: Latin Kings

(U) The Latin Kings is a violent street gang that originated in Chicago, Illinois in the early 1960s. Originally created to overcome racial prejudice, the gang soon became 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 has increased its threat to the state of Texas.



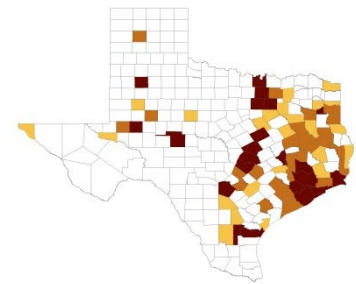
(U) Tier 2: Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)

(U) Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) is the best known transnational street gang in the world, with ongoing command, control, and coordination between gang leaders and cliques in different countries. MS-13 remains a constant threat to the state of Texas through its use of violence and disregard of law enforcement.



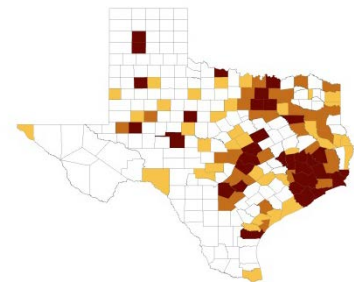
(U) Tier 2: Bloods

(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.^{16 17 18} 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.



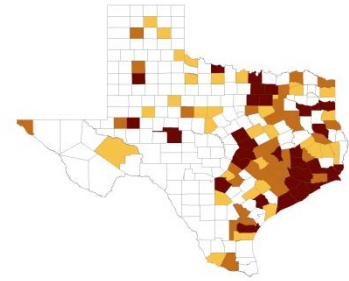
(U) Tier 2: Aryan Brotherhood of Texas

(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. Aryan Brotherhood of Texas is not considered a threat to the border areas of Texas, but threatens Texas internally because of its involvement in violent crimes, the methamphetamine business, and frequent property crimes. Multi-agency investigations have seriously affected ABT's leadership structure and effectiveness.



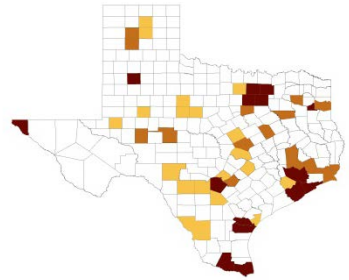
(U) Tier 2: Crips

(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. Crips’ 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.



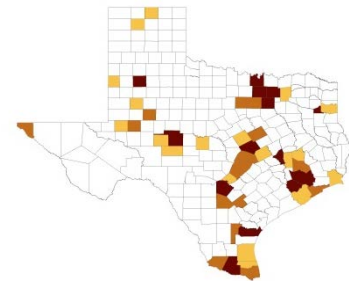
(U) Tier 2: Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang

(U) Formed in the 1960s, the Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (Bandidos OMG) conducts its illegal activities as covertly as possible and avoids high-profile activities such as drive-by shootings that many street gangs tend to commit. However, members are not covert about making their presence known by wearing the gang colors, insignia, and riding in large groups. They seek to turn public sentiment in their favor by organizing frequent charity runs. Bandidos are likely to focus on recruiting new members with no criminal history.



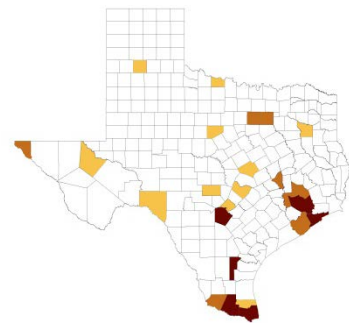
(U) Tier 2: Sureños

(U) The Sureños originated as a gang confederation closely aligned under the umbrella of the California Mexican Mafia. As such, they often utilize the number 13 as a sign of respect 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 strive to establish a stronger presence in Texas in the near future.



(U) Tier 2: Partido Revolucionario Mexicano

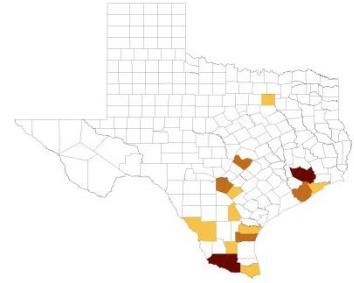
(U) Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (PRM) is an organized and secretive prison gang that operates in Mexico and Texas. Partido Revolucionario Mexicano is composed mainly of Mexican nationals, many of whom are illegal aliens and who are subsequently deported once they are released from prison; this allows the PRM to establish cells on both sides of the border. Partido Revolucionario Mexicano members who are deported often re-enter the United States and establish themselves as members in Texas. Partido Revolucionario Mexicano allows U.S. citizens to become members of the gang in order to maintain their presence in Texas and eliminate the possibility of deportation.



UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

(U) Tier 2: Texas Chicano Brotherhood (TxCB)

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



Appendix 2: Other Contributing Agencies

With appreciation, we recognize the following agencies' contribution to this assessment:

Arlington Police Department
Austin Police Department
Cameron County Sheriff's Office
Carrolton Police Department
Corpus Christi Police Department
Dallas Police Department
El Paso County Sheriff's Office
El Paso Intelligence Center
El Paso Police Department
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Federal Bureau of Prisons - Sacramento Intelligence Unit
Harris County Juvenile Probation Department
Harris County Sheriff's Office
Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office
HIDTA - Houston
HIDTA - North Texas
HIDTA - South Texas
HIDTA - West Texas
Houston Police Department
Laredo Police Department
Maverick County Juvenile Probation Office
Maverick County Sheriff's Office
Nacogdoches County Sheriff's Office
Nueces County Sheriff's Office
Office of the Attorney General, State of Texas
Plano Police Department
San Antonio Police Department
Southwest Texas Fusion Center
Tarrant County District Attorney's Office
Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition
Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Security Threat Group Management Office
Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Office of the Inspector General
Texas Department of Public Safety - Border Security Operations Center
Texas Department of Public Safety - Crime Records
Texas Department of Public Safety - Criminal Investigations Division
Texas Juvenile Justice Department
U.S. Customs and Border Protection - Office of Border Patrol
U.S. Customs and Border Protection - Office of Intelligence and Investigative Liaison
U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Office of Intelligence and Analysis
U.S. Department of Justice - National Gang Intelligence Center
U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Homeland Security Investigations
U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Webb County Sheriff's Office

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

Agencies participating in Operation Border Star are listed below:

Sheriff's Offices					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
Aransas Co SO	Brooks Co SO	Duval Co SO	Dimmit Co SO	Brewster Co SO	El Paso Co SO
Bee Co SO	Cameron Co SO	Frio Co SO	Kinney Co SO	Culberson Co SO	Hudspeth Co SO
Brooks Co SO	Hidalgo Co SO	Jim Hogg Co SO	Maverick Co SO	Hudspeth Co SO	Dona Ana Co SO (NM)
Calhoun Co SO	Kenedy Co SO	La Salle Co SO	Real Co SO	Jeff Davis Co SO	Grant Co SO (NM)
Dewitt Co SO	Willacy Co SO	Webb Co SO	Val Verde Co SO	Pecos Co SO	Hidalgo Co SO (NM)
Goliad Co SO	Starr Co SO	Zapata Co SO	Uvalde Co SO	Presidio Co SO	Luna Co SO (NM)
Gonzales Co SO			Zavala Co SO	Reeves Co SO	Otero Co SO (NM)
Jackson Co SO				Terrell Co SO	
Jim Wells Co SO					
Kleberg Co SO					
Lavaca Co SO					
Live Oak Co SO					
McMullen Co SO					
Nueces Co SO					
Refugio Co SO					
San Patricio Co SO					
Victoria Co SO					
Volunteer Sheriff's Offices					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
Matagorda Co SO			Edwards Co SO	Midland Co SO	
Wharton Co SO				Ward Co SO	
Guadalupe Co SO				Eddy Co SO (NM)	
Police Departments					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
Beeville PD	Alamo PD	Laredo PD	Crystal City PD	Alpine PD	EL Paso PD
Corpus Christi PD	Brownsville PD	Dilley PD	Del Rio PD	Fort Stockton PD	El Paso ISD PD
Cuero PD	Donna PD	Pearsall PD		Odessa PD	Anthony PD
Kingsville PD	Edcouch PD			Pecos PD	Horizon PD
Victoria PD	Edinburg PD			Presidio PD	Socorro PD
	Elsa PD				Ysleta Del Sur PD
	Harlingen PD				El Paso Community College PD
	Hidalgo PD				UT – El Paso PD
	La Ferir PD				Texas Tech University PD
	La Grulla PD				
	La Joya PD				
	Los Fresnos PD				
	McAllen PD				
	Mercedes PD				
	Mission PD				
	Palmview PD				
	Penitas PD				
	Pharr PD				
	Raymondville PD				
	Roma PD				

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

	Rio Grande City PD				
	San Benito PD				
	Sullivan City PD				
	Weslaco PD				
Volunteer Police Departments					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
Alice PD	Alamo PD		Uvalde PD	Odessa PD	
Bay City PD	Donna PD				
Corpus Christi Port Authority PD	Falfurrias PD				
Driscoll PD	Palmhurst PD				
El Campo PD	Port Isabel PD				
George West PD	UT-Pan American				
Hallettsville PD	UT-Brownsville				
Orange Grove PD					
Port Lavaca PD					
Robstown PD					
Rockport PD					
Seguin PD					
Sinton PD					
Three Rivers PD					
Volunteer Other Locals					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
Nueces Co Precinct 3 Constable	Hidalgo Co Precinct 1 Constable		38th Judicial District		El Paso Constables
	Hidalgo Co Precinct 3 Constable		Dimmit Co Constable Pct 2		
	Hidalgo Co Precinct 4 Constable		Dimmit Co Constable 3		
			Zavala Co Constable		
State					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
DPS	DPS	DPS	DPS	DPS	DPS
TMF	TMF	TMF	TMF	TMF	TABC
TxDOT					Texas AG Ofc – El Paso
TPWD	TPWD	TPWD	TPWD	TPWD	Texas Comptroller's Ofc
					TMF
					TPWD
Federal					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
ATF	CBP-OFO	ATF	CBO-OFO	CBO-OFO	CBP-OFO
CBO-OFO	ICE	CBO-OFO	DEA	ICE	DEA
DEA	Starr Co HIDTA	DEA	ICE	NPS	ICE
FBI	USBP	FBI	NPS	West TX HIDTA	US State Dept (US Diplomatic Protection Service)
Houston HIDTA	USCG	ICE	South TX HIDTA	USBP	US Marshals Service
South TX HIDTA	US Fish & Wildlife	USBP	USBP		West TX HIDTA

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

ICE	Texas Military Forces	US Marshals	US Marshals		
PINS-US Park Service					
USBP					
USPS					
USCG					
Private					
COASTAL BEND	RGV	LAREDO	DEL RIO	MARFA	EL PASO
Union Pacific RR PD					Union Pacific RR PD

Agencies contributing to the TxGang database are listed below:

- Addison Police Department
- Alice Police Department
- Amarillo Police Department
- Anderson 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/Corrections
- Bexar County Sheriff's Office
- Big Spring Police Department
- Brazoria County Sheriff's Office
- Brownsville Police Department
- Bryan Police Department
- Bureau of ATF - Beaumont
- Carrollton Police Department
- Cleveland ISD 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
- Denton County Sheriff's Office
- Donna ISD 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

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

Farmers Branch Police Department
Forney Police Department
Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office
Fort Worth District Attorney's Office
Fort Worth Police Department
Frisco Police Department
Gainesville Police Department
Galveston County Sheriff's Office
Garland Police Department
Georgetown Police Department
Grand Prairie Police Department
Haltom City Police Department
Harlingen Police Department
Harris County Sheriff's Office
Hays County Gang Force
Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office
Hill County Sheriff's Office
Hondo Police Department
Houston University of Texas Police Department
Houston ISD Police Department
Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority Police Department
Houston Police Department
Humble ISD Police Department
Hunt County Sheriff's Office
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Irving Police Department
Jersey Village Police Department
Jim Wells County Sheriff's Office
Joshua Police Department
Katy ISD Police Department
Kenedy Police Department
Kerr County Sheriff's Office
Kilgore Police Department
Killeen Police Department
Kleberg County Sheriff's Office
La Marque Police Department
Lancaster Police Department
Lewisville Police Department
Longview Police Department
Lubbock County Sheriff's Office
Lubbock Police Department
Mansfield Police Department
Marble Falls Police Department
McAllen Police Department
McLennan County Sheriff's Office
Mesquite Police Department
Midland Police Department
Missouri City Police Department
Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Nacogdoches County Sheriff's Office

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

Nacogdoches Police Department
New Braunfels Police Department
Nueces County Sheriff's Office
Onalaska Police Department
Parker County Sheriff's Office
Pasadena Police Department
Pharr Police Department
Plano Police Department
Primera Police Department
Randall County Sheriff's Office
Richmond Constable's Office Pct 1
Robstown Police Department
Rockport Police Department
Rosenberg Police Department
Sachse Police Department
San Angelo Police Department
San Antonio Police Department
San Juan Police Department
Santa Fe Police Department
Seguin Police Department
Sherman Police Department
Sinton District Attorney's Office
Spearman Police Department
Spring Branch ISD Police Department
Spring ISD Police Department
Sugar Land Police Department
Tarrant County Sheriff's Office
Temple Police Department
Texas City Police Department
Texas Department of Public Safety
The Colony Police Department
Tiki Island Police Department
Tom Green County Sheriff's Office
Travis County Sheriff's Office
Tyler Police Department
Victoria Police Department
Waco Juvenile Probation Office
Weatherford Police Department
Wharton Police Department
Wichita Falls Police Department
Williamson County Sheriff's Office

UNCLASSIFIED
Texas Gang Threat Assessment

References

This assessment was produced based on intelligence information of a sensitive nature, which is not referenced specifically. Information from other sources is referenced below.

-
- ¹ United States Department of Justice (USDOJ). National Gang Intelligence Center. National Gang Threat Assessment, 2011.
 - ² USDOJ. National Gang Intelligence Center. National Gang Threat Assessment, 2009.
 - ³ Map based on information compiled from multiple sources, showing the concentration of gang activity across Texas. The absence of shading in a county does not necessarily indicate the absence of gang activity.
 - ⁴ Data obtained from Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office, 2013.
 - ⁵ Data obtained from United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Rio Grande Valley Sector, 2013.
 - ⁶ Sureños Operations and Proliferation in the Four Corners States, *Utah Statewide Information & Analysis Center*, 02/28/13
 - ⁷ Data obtained from El Paso Police Department and El Paso Sheriff's Office, 2012
 - ⁸ El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). "Sureños – The Muscle of the Mexican Mafia." Gang Intelligence Unit, n.d.
 - ⁹ Open Source News Article, "FBI: El Paso gangs could join Cartel power struggles." El Paso Times. http://www.elpasotimes.com/ci_14865675. April 12, 2010.
 - ¹⁰ Data obtained from the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), 2013.
 - ¹¹ Texas DPS. "DPS Reporting on Corpitos Tensions with TS." 2009
 - ¹² USDOJ. National Gang Intelligence Center. National Gang Threat Assessment 2009.
 - ¹³ USDOJ. National Gang Intelligence Center. National Gang Threat Assessment 2011.
 - ¹⁴ TDCJ. Offense Records. Compiled August 31, 2013.
 - ¹⁵ Open Source News Article. "Alleged Pimp Behind Bars, but Feared in North Shore." Houston Chronicle. <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Alleged-pimp-behind-bars-but-feared-in-North-1685219.php>. June 11, 2011.
 - ¹⁶ Open Source News Article. "Texas Judge Rules to Ban Bloods, Crips from Houston Neighborhood." ABC News. <http://abcnews.go.com/US/texas-judge-ban-crips-bloods-houston-neighborhood/story?id=19274415>. May 29, 2013.
 - ¹⁷ FBI. "Twenty-Three Arrested on Federal Charges as a Result of San Antonio Eastside Gang Violence Initiative." <http://www.fbi.gov/sanantonio/press-releases/2012/twenty-three-arrested-on-federal-charges-as-a-result-of-san-antonio-eastside-gang-violence-initiative>. May 11, 2012.
 - ¹⁸ FBI. "Texas City Safe Streets Task Force Nets Four More for Trafficking Crack." <http://www.fbi.gov/houston/press-releases/2011/texas-city-safe-streets-task-force-nets-four-more-for-trafficking-crack>. September 09, 2011.