



Media Statement

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City of Compton Requests Immediate State and Federal Investigations into Pervasive Civil Rights Violations by the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department

City Attorney Issued Letters Requesting the Investigations to the U.S. Attorney General, U.S. Attorney of the Central District of California, and the California Attorney General

Compton, CA – The City of Compton’s City Attorney, Damon M. Brown, issued formal requests to U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr, U.S. Attorney of the Central District of California Nicola T. Hanna, and the California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to investigate allegations of a pattern and practice of pervasive federal civil rights violations by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD). City Attorney Brown alleges, among other things, that 18 U.S.C. §242, which makes it unlawful for any person acting under the color of law—including police officers who are functioning or appear to be functioning in their official capacity—to willfully deprive an individual of a right or privilege protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States, is being perpetually violated by Sheriff’s deputies in Compton.

In response to the outcry from residents that LASD deputies have engaged in misconduct, excessive force, discriminatory policing and conducted improper stops, searches and arrests, City Attorney Brown stated:

“We believe several deputies within Compton Station have a history of violence against Black and Latino men and women...[and] urge your office to open an investigation immediately into all potential civil rights abuses, including a pattern or practice of systemic, unconstitutional policing [...], and obtain a court order requiring LASD to address systemic institutional failures.”

The letters also reference the recent whistleblower allegations, raised by Deputy Austreberto Gonzalez, that a gang of Sheriff’s deputies known as the “Executioners” is improperly controlling every aspect of operations within Compton Station, including setting illegal arrest quotas and purposely ignoring or slowly responding to calls for service. The gang, whose members and prospects comprise approximately 40% of all deputies in Compton Station and exclude black and female deputies, sport matching tattoos of Nazi imagery and an AK-47.

Mayor Aja Brown stated:

“The claims about this alleged gang are absolutely egregious. We will not tolerate disrespect from the Sheriff deputies that we pay to protect us, to help us when we are in danger, and to be of service in times of an emergency. We expect a full and immediate investigation from Attorney General Xavier Becerra and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on what we believe are persistent violations of the civil rights of our community. In the case that civil violations are found, we expect the perpetrators to be held accountable to the full extent of the law.”

The City has demanded that Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva swiftly initiate full investigations into the incidents involving Compton resident Dalvin Price, the death of Compton resident Andres Guardado, the excessive force used by deputies during a protest at the Compton Civic Center, and the alleged gang activity within Compton Station. In response to the City’s multiple demands for swift action, including the transfer out of Compton Station

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of the deputies whose conduct is under investigation, Sheriff Villanueva has remained largely silent, and the responses he has given have questioned the legitimacy of the claims and the intentions behind Compton's elected leadership for issuing these demands.

Regarding Sheriff Villanueva's responses, City Attorney Brown stated:

“This abject deflection of responsibility can only be seen as participation in a conspiracy to conceal the truths undergirding these civil rights abuses, or reflective of his complete abdication of leadership. Both are unacceptable.”

The City has taken multiple actions to attempt to hold the Sheriff's Department accountable to the residents. These actions include:

- Issuing multiple letters to the Sheriff demanding swift action with the involved deputies and for transparency into the investigations.
- Holding a public townhall with Sheriff Villanueva on June 29, 2020 to demand transparency and accountability measures for deputies to better serve the community.
- Securing commitment from the Compton Station Captain LaTanya Clark to require Sheriff vehicles operating out of Compton Station bear City decals to allow residents and elected leadership to identify and hold accountable Compton deputies.
- Obtaining Sheriff Villanueva's commitment that Compton will be the first contract city to receive body-worn cameras for its deputies in the Department's second phase of deployment of the program.
- Passing an urgency ordinance to establish a Law Enforcement Review Board dedicated towards increased accountability by serving as a direct link for Compton residents to communicate and submit concerns regarding interactions with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

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