



Office of the Attorney General

Washington, D. C. 20530

April 5, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR HEAD OF DEPARTMENT COMPONENTS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffery B. Sessions".

SUBJECT: Update on the Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety

Combating violent crime is a priority of this Administration, and I want to take this opportunity to provide you an update on some of the Department's recent activities in this area. Recently, I directed all federal prosecutors to engage in a focused effort to investigate, prosecute, and thus deter violent criminals. Many of you are already engaged in this important work, and I want you to know that you have my full support to make violence reduction a priority within your jurisdictions. I believe that if we work together to address the most violent offenders, we can help reverse the recent increases in violent crime.

On February 27th, I established the Department's Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety (the Task Force). This Task Force will identify ways in which the federal government can more effectively combat illegal immigration and violent crime, such as gun crime, drug trafficking, and gang violence. The Task Force will accomplish its work through a variety of subcommittees, and those groups are already hard at work, benefiting from the expertise of many offices throughout the Department. I have asked for initial recommendations from the Task Force no later than July 27th, but will continue to act upon recommendations as they become available and direct the policy of the Department on an ongoing basis.

The Violent Crime Reduction Strategy Development Subcommittee will make recommendations for the Department's overall violent crime reduction strategy, which will include focused enforcement against violent offenders. This subcommittee will also examine ways in which we can support local partners engaged in enforcement, prevention, and reentry efforts; leverage existing law enforcement efforts; and measure the effectiveness of our work.

Task Force subcommittees will also undertake a review of existing policies in the areas of charging, sentencing, and marijuana to ensure consistency with the Department's overall strategy on reducing violent crime and with Administration goals and priorities. Another subcommittee will explore our use of asset forfeiture and make recommendations on any improvements needed to legal authorities, policies, and training to most effectively attack the financial infrastructure of criminal organizations.

We must also protect the civil rights of all Americans, and we will not tolerate threats or acts of violence targeting any person or community in this country on the basis of their religious beliefs or background. Accordingly, the Hate Crimes Subcommittee will develop a plan to appropriately address hate crimes to better protect the rights of all Americans. As with many other areas of the Task Force's work, we are already making significant progress toward our goal of a safer America. Recently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, working with law enforcement partners in Israel and elsewhere, helped secure the arrest of a man believed to be responsible for the recent surge in threats of violence against Jewish community centers and synagogues. I commend their outstanding efforts.

The Task Force subcommittees will also focus on immigration enforcement and human trafficking to ensure that the federal government has an aggressive and coordinated strategy to deter those who violate our borders and subject others to forced labor, involuntary servitude, sex trafficking, and other forms of modern-day slavery.

Many of these efforts will require that we have access to complete, accurate, and timely crime data and that the Department and our law enforcement partners and prosecutors across the country are able to rely on prompt and accurate forensic science analysis to investigate and prosecute violent offenders. Task Force subcommittees will examine these issues as well and make recommendations to me on needed improvements.

We cannot carry out this important work without the help of our law enforcement and community partners. I have directed the Task Force to hold a National Summit on Crime Reduction and Public Safety within 120 days, so that we can learn from federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, victims' advocacy organizations, and community advocacy organizations about how we can best support and replicate successful local violent crime reduction efforts. This partnership is an essential, and we have much to learn from these groups. In addition, as part of the important work the Task Force is undertaking to combat hate crimes, the Department's Civil Rights Division will be reaching out to affected communities to hear directly what strategies and support are most needed to help reduce this particularly pernicious crime.

As a complement to the Task Force's work, I have pledged to listen to the stories and concerns of those who are most affected by this rise in violent crime in communities across the country. I started my travels in Richmond, Virginia, where I talked with our law enforcement partners, crime victims, community leaders and others. Last week, I was in St. Louis, Missouri. And I expect to visit additional cities in the weeks to come.

Importantly, I also want to hear from you, the Department's dedicated public servants. If you have specific recommendations or ideas on how to reduce violent crime, please contact Steven H. Cook (Steven.H.Cook@usdoj.gov, 202-305-0180), a career prosecutor from the Eastern District of Tennessee on detail to the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, or Robyn L. Thiemann (Robyn.Thiemann2@usdoj.gov, 202 514-8356), a 20-year Department veteran and Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Policy, with any ideas or inquiries regarding the work of the Task Force.

I look forward to working with you in the coming months to secure the safety of all Americans, including the brave men and women of law enforcement, while ensuring fairness, impartiality, and equal justice under law.