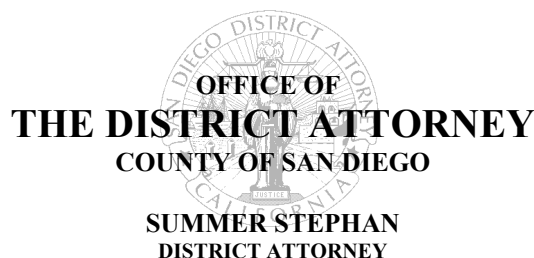


330 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 531-4040
SanDiegoDA.com



DWAIN D. WOODLEY
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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For Immediate Release

Contact: [Steve Walker](#) (619) 843-7977
[Tanya Sierra](#) (619) 531-3315
En Español [Barbara Medina](#) (619) 531-3305

DA's Office Refers Juvenile Homicide Case to U.S. Attorney's Office for Prosecution

Case Dismissal Comes Amid a Troubling Increase in Violent Juvenile Crime

In March of this year, two minors were arrested for murder, attempted murder involving firearms, and other felony crimes which occurred in the County of San Diego.

The District Attorney's Office subsequently charged the minors for these violent and premeditated, offenses. Since that time, the District Attorney's Office has worked closely with, local and federal agencies to continue to investigate the case and reduce the threat of violent crime in our community.

In the interest of public safety, and to address an ongoing increase in juvenile crime, the District Attorney's Office made the decision to refer and transfer this case to the United States Attorney's Office, today dismissing our petition charging the minors in Juvenile Court. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District has a long and distinguished expertise and history in successfully prosecuting crimes of this nature, and the U.S. Attorney is fully committed to keep our region safe further supporting the decision to defer prosecution to their office.

The number of juvenile cases in San Diego County has been increasing significantly year-over-year. Juvenile crime referrals for prosecution from law enforcement are up 13% from 2022 to 2023, and they are currently on track to increase another 13% this year. Juvenile cases filed (petitions) with the court went up 19% from 2022 to 2023, and they are currently on track to increase another 11% this year despite about 30% of cases involving non-violent crimes that are reviewed being diverted to the DA's Juvenile Diversion Initiative program.

The increase of criminally sophisticated youths perpetrating violent crimes that include the use of firearms and result in great bodily injury and death is highly concerning to law enforcement. It is important that those who engage in violent crime in San Diego County understand that these crimes will be taken seriously, even when committed by minors.

"Violent crime committed by minors is a threat to our community and will not be tolerated in our county without consequences," said San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan. "It is imperative that minors committing murders and other serious and violent crimes understand they

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will not escape accountability. There's a growing public safety concern that adult criminals are enticing minors to commit violent crimes with assurances that they will escape accountability due to California's state juvenile laws. The referral for federal prosecution in this case aims to stop the recruitment of minors to execute violent crimes. San Diego will remain committed to strong collaboration between our courageous federal, state, and local partners to keep our community safe and to not permit these violent acts to occur in our local neighborhoods."

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.

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