



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 29, 2015

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES OVER \$2 MILLION ANNUAL INVESTMENT TO FUND ANTI-VIOLENCE PROSECUTION STRATEGIES THAT TARGET INTERSECTION BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND NARCOTICS

Four of the top 10 precincts for narcotics arrests are also in top 10 precincts for shooting incidents

Investment includes expanded prosecution strategies that disrupt heroin supply to fight the City's heroin overdose epidemic

NEW YORK—The de Blasio administration today announced a more than \$2 million annual investment to expand the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's effective investigation and prosecution of crimes involving gun violence and narcotics trafficking, as well as the Office's strategies to address the heroin epidemic. Today's announcement reinforces the Administration's commitment to focus resources on proven law enforcement strategies for reducing violent crime.

"Despite dramatic decreases in violent crime, we know that drug-related violence continues to be a problem that the City must address – and we will use every means necessary to stop this violence at its root. By combining sophisticated technology and cutting-edge investigations, the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, in collaboration with the NYPD and other law enforcement agencies, targets those individuals responsible for violence in our city," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan has an outstanding track record of dismantling violent narcotic distribution networks, and this investment marks an important expansion of proven anti-violence strategies."

The office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan has citywide jurisdiction, functioning as an arm of the District Attorneys' offices in each of the five boroughs, and is uniquely suited to investigate and prosecute narcotics-related criminal activity citywide. The New York Police Department, Special Narcotics Prosecutor, and the City's five District Attorneys have had recent success infiltrating and dismantling such networks using cutting-edge technology to identify and pursue members of criminal enterprises from street-level dealers to top suppliers, often investigating related violent gang activity. Today's announcement is the first step the de Blasio Administration is taking to expand investment in targeted anti-violence prosecution strategies citywide.

Recent NYPD, District Attorney, and Special Narcotics Prosecutor successes include:

- A 69-count indictment against 12 individuals – including Ackquille Pollard, aka "Bobby Shmurda," who performs with a rap group that bears the name "GS9" – in December of 2014, crippling a gang that allegedly sold drugs, dealt guns and committed violent crimes. The investigation began after 24 shootings were traced to the gang since 2013. Pollard has since been indicted on additional charges by the Bronx District Attorney's Office that stem from an alleged attempt to smuggle a weapon into Rikers Island's Anna M. Kross Center.

- A long-term investigation sparked by community complaints and incidents of drug and gang-related violence in Coney Island culminated last month in the 34-count indictment of four individuals on narcotic and firearm charges.

These effective takedowns underscore the fact that fighting violent crime is not only the job of police, but requires coordination among all criminal justice actors, including targeted prosecution.

Over the next five years, the City will invest nearly \$2.1 million annually in bolstering the capacity of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office:

- \$1.27 million annually to fund drug and gun anti-violence prosecution
- \$280,000 annually for expanded resources to combat the heroin epidemic
- \$435,000 annually to reinforce sophisticated technology infrastructure
- \$75,000 annually to support day-to-day operations

Over the past 20 years, New York City has seen a crime decline that has led the nation and made New York the safest large city in the United States. Every major type of crime plummeted over the last two decades – both murders and robberies have dropped by over 80 percent. Mayor de Blasio finished his first year in office with the fewest homicides – 333 – in the city's history. The NYPD recently announced that June 2015 was the safest June in the city since 1993, and that shootings have decreased by more than 19 percent and murders have dropped by 50 percent in the precincts that have received extra officers under the Department's "Summer All Out" initiative.

Despite dramatic reductions in violent crime, New York City experiences isolated shooting spikes, often connected to drug gangs. Although shootings vary year to year and borough to borough, these incidents tend to be concentrated in a few neighborhoods and largely committed by a few gangs and street crews. Four of the top 10 precincts for narcotics arrests are also in the top 10 precincts for shootings incidents. These four precincts account for 12.8 percent of narcotics arrests and 18.4 percent of shooting incidents citywide. Brooklyn and the Bronx have had success in reducing shooting incidents this year, with the number in both boroughs dropping by 5 percent compared to last year.

"Despite all the gains we've made in reducing violence in the city, there are too many neighborhoods that still live with the fear of gunfire and random violence, often linked to narcotics activity. The funding that's announced today will help us to address the underlying crimes that fuel the violence," said **Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan**. "We thank the Administration and the City Council for their support, and we look forward to close collaboration with the District Attorneys on these investigations."

"A link between violence and narcotics dealing has been clearly established over the years and it continues to be a serious problem in parts of New York City," said **Police Commissioner William Bratton**. "A significant amount of violence, including shootings and murders, can be directly associated with illegal drug activity. The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor has been instrumental in the apprehension and successful prosecution of numerous individuals who have committed violent felonies in furtherance of their illegal narcotics activities. The on-going work of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor is key to continuing the war on illegal narcotics as well as the associated violence that still affects too many areas of our city."

"Our first responsibility is to keep New Yorkers safe. Today, we are doubling down on strategies that have had demonstrated success infiltrating and dismantling the narcotic distribution networks we know can often be linked to shooting spikes. I look forward to continuing to work with the City's police and prosecutors to ensure that our might and resources are directed toward the most effective ways to drive down violence," said **Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice**.

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown said, “Law enforcement has long seen the correlation between illegal drug sales and acts of violence and, for more than four decades, the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor has partnered with the City’s five District Attorney Offices in the fight against those who poison our streets with narcotics and put fear into the daily lives of innocent people. I commend the Mayor’s Office for its continued commitment to focus resources on law enforcement strategies.”

“The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor is one of our most valuable assets in terms of making the city safer,” said **Bronx County District Attorney Robert Johnson**. “Cases that cross county lines and fall in more than one jurisdiction can be effectively handled through Bridget Brennan’s office. We can feel confident that these additional resources offered by the Mayor will make an already highly efficient office even more effective in removing drugs and violence from our streets.”

“Despite the progress we’ve seen in recent years, we all know that violence, especially drug related violence, continues to be a problem in many parts of our community. This funding will help address both problems in a comprehensive manner by using cutting edge technologies and techniques that have been proven to be effective. Thanks to this funding, New York City families and children will be able to enjoy even safer streets,” said **Congressman José E. Serrano**.

“I thank Mayor de Blasio for committing to a \$2 million annual enhancement for the Office of the Special Prosecutor, an investment that will increase the ability of law enforcement to eradicate violent crime in our city and address the growing heroin epidemic across the five boroughs,” said **Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson, Chair of the New York City Council Public Safety Committee**. “Drugs play an insidious part in the violence in our city, and while violent crime has declined overall, too many New York communities remain plagued by violent acts easily traced back to drugs. The investment we are making today will provide Special Prosecutor Bridget Brennan and her team with amplified resources to investigate possibly drug-related gang activity and prosecute distributors to the fullest extent of the law. These funds will aide in our work to address the rise of heroin overdoses by helping the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor stop the supply of heroin coming in to this city. I thank the Special Prosecutor for her exemplary work and service and commend the Mayor for making this investment.”

Today’s investment will also expand the Special Narcotics Prosecutor’s success in dismantling heroin distribution networks, at a time in New York City when heroin overdoses have outpaced homicides for two years in a row. The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and its local, state and federal partners have seized over 250 kilograms of heroin (550 pounds) so far this year, including a record-breaking seizure of 70 kilograms (154 pounds) in the Fieldston section of the Bronx in May.

###