



## **SAR Fact Sheet**

Since March of 2008, under LAPD Chief's **Special Order (SO) 17** (previously [SO 11](#) and [SO 1](#)) LAPD officers have filed thousands of Suspicious Activity Reports (SAR) on everyday activities including: **taking photographs; using video cameras; drawing diagrams; taking notes; using binoculars; and inquiring about hours of operation.** Furthermore, starting in October 2009, LAPD launched the [iWATCH](#) – “*See Something, Say Something*” program to actively recruit community informants.

### **LAPD SAR Program Details:**

- The latest IG [audit](#) released on June 7, 2019 exposed continuing pattern of racial profiling of Black, Brown, and immigrant communities and the weaponizing of the iWATCH See Something, Say Something program by communities in LA with majority White populations. Out of a total of 348 SARs:
  1. 293 (84%) were filed by community informants through the iWATCH - See Something, Say Something program;
  2. 206 (59%) were filed in majority white communities in the LAPD West and Valley Bureaus;
  3. Race was identified in 164 SARs. Of this race data 22% are Black (dis-proportionately represents 2.5 times LA's 9.5% Black population) and 30% Latinos. Race data listed in the IG audit as “Other” shows 26% Middle Eastern, South Asians and several other immigrant communities;
  4. 176 (51%) of SARs didn't even meet basic standards and were deemed unfounded;
- The previous three audits exposed overwhelming racial profiling and disparate impact on LA's Black community and other non-white communities. Following is the race breakdown of the total SARs sent to LA's Fusion Center by LAPD for national security and criminal investigations in the three previous audits:
  1. [2013 Audit](#): 24% Black; 59% other races including Latinos, Middle Eastern, and Asian communities. Total of 83% Non-Whites;
  2. [2015 Audit](#): 31% Black; 39% other Races including Latinos, Middle Eastern, and Asian communities. Total of 70% Non-Whites;
  3. [2016 Audit](#): 26% Middle Eastern, 15% Black; 37% other races including Latinos and Asians. Total of 78% Non-Whites
- The audits also exposed how majority white communities in LAPD's West and Valley Bureaus continually weaponize the SAR iWATCH - See Something, Say Something program to profile non-white people in their neighborhoods;
  1. 2013 Audit: 49% of the total SARs were reported on the West Bureau;
  2. 2015 Audit: 81% of the total SARs were reported by community informants. Majority of these reports came from LAPD West and Valley Bureaus;
  3. 2016 Audit: 68% of the total SARs were reported by community informants from LAPD West and Valley Bureaus
- Since the start of the SAR program in March 2008, several Inspector General audits and LAPD's own documents have shown overwhelming number of these secret files opened by officers and reported by

community informants were considered useless due to several reasons. Yet people's' names are placed in databases. For example, as per the Government Accountability Office (GAO) once the SAR goes to Fusion Center and is considered useless, the FBI keeps the information for 30 years;

- Documents received by the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition through the Calif. Public Records Act Request show:
  1. From March 2008 to April 2012, LAPD filed 4968 SARs (almost 3 SARs per day over a period of 4 years);
  2. 80% of the SARs sent to the Fusion Center did not even meet basic standards – *yet the fusion center can keep this information for 5 years and the FBI can retain this information for 30 years;*
  3. A July 2010 report reported that LAPD sent 2668 SARs to the Fusion Center, yet the Fusion Center considered only 66 (2%) for further investigation. Meaning 98% SARs were useless;
  4. The 2016 IG audit exposed that of the total SARs filed, 57% were considered useless to begin with;

### **The LAPD SAR Program Impact on Community:**

- Creates a culture of suspicion and paranoia, leads to fear mongering and creates a strong potential for violence against those considered “suspicious”;
- Reinforces social biases, and promotes racial, ethnic and religious profiling;
- The iWATCH Program is a license to profile, creating a culture of racialized violence;
- Encourages harmful actions based on hunches and highly manipulable concepts of “reasonable indication” and “observed behavior;”
- Allows the routine use of everyday activity, like taking pictures or using binoculars and many more, to open formal police investigations without one’s knowledge. **These are secret files;**
- Systematically incentivizes the invasion of privacy rights;
- Allows LAPD to gather unlimited data and put unprecedented power in the hands of LAPD, **and in a more secretive way**, despite its long history of institutional racism, constitutional violations and violence;
- **The SAR program is Waste of Resources:** In October 2012, the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, released a [critical report](#) on Fusion Centers calling it “**Waste at State and Local Intelligence Fusion Centers.**” The report described intelligence gathering at Fusion Centers as:
  1. Flawed, irrelevant, useless, and inappropriate or unrelated to terrorism;
  2. Containing nothing of value though costing almost \$1.4 billion in federal spending;
  3. Possibly violating privacy act protections and not subject to adequate financial oversight;
  4. and ***Failing to hold officials accountable who reportedly violated guidelines.***
  5. When asked by the L.A. Times about the Senate report, LAPD deputy chief and head of counter-terrorism bureau at the time Michael Downing said, “*There’s a lot of white noise, but there are occasional gold nuggets.*” Yet, as the L.A. Times reported, none of these “gold nuggets” led to a conviction.
- **The SAR program is Junk Science:** LAPD claims that the SAR program is based on the concepts of data mining and behavioral surveillance. The National Academy of Science in a 2008 [report](#) concluded regarding behavioral surveillance that “*although research and development on certain aspects of this topic are warranted, there is no scientific consensus on whether these techniques are ready for operational use at all in counterterrorism.*” The study further concluded regarding data mining that “*although these methods have been useful in the private sector for spotting consumer fraud, they are less helpful for counterterrorism because, so little is known about what patterns indicate terrorist activity.*”

Join the Fight in Dismantling and Abolishing this racist program. For further information please email us at [stoplapdspying@gmail.com](mailto:stoplapdspying@gmail.com) or message us through Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.