

Gov. Lujan Grisham targets violent suspects

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SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Oct. 29 ordered the creation of a team of New Mexico law enforcement officers to locate and arrest hundreds of fugitives charged with violent crimes.

The Fugitive Apprehension Unit, established through an executive order, will consist of at least seven state police officers and at least seven New Mexico Corrections Department staff members.

The Department of Public Safety secretary can also request that municipal police officers and county sheriff's deputies join the unit as needed, according to the order, which specifies requisite authority must be obtained from those government agencies.

The New Mexico Administrative Office of the District Attorneys has identified more than 1,600 outstanding bench warrants for people charged with violent crimes. The unit is responsible for locating and arresting those individuals charged with violent crimes who have failed to appear for judicial proceedings or who have outstanding bench warrants.

Unit members will confer with local law enforcement and judiciary officials to identify qualifying individuals to locate and arrest those persons.

In 2018, according to FBI data, New Mexico had the nation's second-highest violent crime rate.

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Public Safety Secretary Mark Shea, New Mexico State Police Chief Tim Johnson and unit members will make monthly reports to the governor documenting the unit's efforts.

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