

# Sureños

**Also known as:** Sur 13, Los Sureños, Sureño Trece

**History:** The term “sureños” describes gangs professing allegiance to a gang set in southern California. The term was first used in the 1970s as a result of a California prison war between the Mexican Mafia (La EME) and Nuestra Familia (NF). This war resulted in a territorial division between gang members from northern California (norteños = northerners) who aligned with NF, and those from southern California (sureños = southerners) aligned with La EME.

**Membership/Hierarchy:** On the streets of California, southern California street gangs are collectively referred to as Sureño gangs. Each gang has its own identity on the streets, and Sureño gangs share no common organizational structure; however, they are all subordinate to La EME. Within the prison system, members of these gangs often unite under the Sureño umbrella.

**Location:** In addition to prison association, some individual Sureño gangs or gang members have migrated out of California and assimilated under the name *Sureño*, establishing themselves across the country. The gang members rarely maintain associations in California, but use the name to signal their alliance with other Sureño gangs. These gangs use names such as Sur 13, Los Sureños, Sureño Trece, or other variations.

**Criminal Activity:** These gangs routinely conduct low level drug sales and provide the California Mexican Mafia ten percent of their profits. Although Sureño gangs primarily profits from drug distribution, they will engage in almost any criminal activity that will turn a profit, including major theft and alien smuggling. Sureño gangs have also been associated with drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and conduct enforcement activities on their behalf. The DTOs prefer to use these “soldiers” in some instances so that they do not risk the arrest of high level DTO members.

**Gang Identifiers:** Sureño identifiers will always include the number 13 and will likely include “Sur” or “Sureño.”