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PRESS RELEASE – Riverside County Sheriff Refuses to Enforce the Law in the Disputed Area

On January 28, 2013, CRIT employees and tribal police broke into a residence at Lingle Akins, confiscated personal property, posted “No Trespassing” signs, and replaced all locks on the home and the property. The Riverside County Sheriff was notified the same day of the theft and takeover of the property. The eviction and theft of property was done without a court order, and in violation of state and federal law. The owner of the property had recently signed a new lease and executed a Promissory Note with CRIT. He had received a threat from CRIT a few weeks earlier and was in discussions with them. He also initiated communications with Senator Barbara Boxer’s office regarding the matter.

The Sheriff responded by contacting CRIT. Apparently based on information obtained from CRIT, the initial police report classified the owner as “trespassing”, even though the report acknowledged that the owner “rents” the space. The report also includes notification to the owner that the incident was a “civil issue” and advised him to contact “the office of the Colorado River Indian Tribes”. The sheriff’s supplemental report furnished on Feb. 5 included documentation from CRIT, including a “Notice of Abandonment”, citing the CRIT Eviction Code which allows “Self Help” evictions for abandoned property. The sheriff did not request **any** documentation from the owner showing that indeed CRIT was very aware that the property was not abandoned.

Subsequently, the owner continued discussion with the sheriff by asking three questions:

- 1) Does the Sheriff realize that this was a “self-help” eviction?
- 2) What legal authority allows “self-help” evictions in the disputed area?
- 3) “Does the Sheriff realize that my constitutional right to due process has been denied?”

The sheriff responded to the questions by refusing to acknowledge that the eviction was “self help”, ignored the request to provide the legal authority, and advised the owner to contact CRIT if he wanted his constitutional rights.

The result of the Riverside County Sheriff’s refusal to enforce Public Law 280 and California Penal Code §418 is the complete abandonment of the rule of law in the disputed area. Residents should recognize that regardless of whether or not they have signed an agreement with CRIT, they will be denied police protection in accordance with any federal law, state law, or any constitutional rights.

The Lingle Akins confiscation of property represents the most flagrant criminal act by CRIT and their partners in crime, the Riverside County Sheriff. From the initial seizure of private property at Red Rooster in 2000 by a bogus citizen’s arrest and compliance with the sheriff, through the Ron Jones illegal confiscation of property, to CRIT v French where the tribal appellate court refuses to issue a ruling fearful of a federal overturn, it is all too clear that CRIT’s illegal actions left unchecked will continue to accelerate.