



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SUES CALIFORNIA LANDLORDS FOR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HISPANIC TENANTS

WASHINGTON - The Justice Department today filed a lawsuit against Gary Luke, the owner of two apartment buildings in Garden Grove, Calif., and Mary Ngo, co-owner of one of the properties, alleging a pattern or practice of discriminating against Hispanic tenants. The lawsuit arose as a result of a charge issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The complaint, filed in federal district court in the Central District of California, related to the rental policies practiced at the residential buildings located at 13172 and 13192 Adland Street. Specifically, the complaint alleges that the Luke and Ngo terminated the leases of Hispanic tenants to replace them with Vietnamese tenants, misrepresented the availability of units to non-Vietnamese prospective tenants, and made statements in connection with the rental of apartment units that express a preference, limitation, or discrimination based on national origin.

The suit seeks monetary damages to compensate victims, civil penalties, and a court order barring future discrimination.

Fighting illegal housing discrimination is a top priority of the Justice Department. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales announced Operation Home Sweet Home, a concentrated initiative to expose and eliminate housing discrimination in America. This initiative was inspired by the plight of displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who were suddenly forced to find new places to live. Operation Home Sweet Home is not limited to the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina, and targets housing discrimination all over the country.

For more information about Operation Home Sweet Home, please visit the Justice Department Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/fairhousing> . Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination may call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line

at 1-800-896-7743, email the Justice Department at fairhousing@usdoj.gov, or contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin and disability. Since January 2001, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has filed 215 cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act, including 22 based on national origin. For more information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces, go to www.usdoj.gov/crt