

Apartment Complex or Criminal Haven?

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HOUSTON - There's an area in Northwest Houston you have to see to believe. The crime is so bad the city of Houston is now fighting a court battle to help get rid of it.

Residents say their community is so overrun with crime the criminals no longer try to hide. They say the criminals have taken over.

The neighborhood is off of Tidwell - just 18 minutes from downtown Houston.

There's one abandoned apartment complex after another. Residents compare it to living in a war zone.

"They're simply afraid. Would you move in to a property that looks like that across the street? It looks like Beirut" says Tom Miller who owns an occupied apartment complex in the area.

Miller and a group of northwest Houston residents complained to city council members. They say the abandoned apartments are used for everything, but the right thing.

"That's where they do their drug deals. There's prostitution going on. They also have stolen most of the copper. So that's gone. What's left is a place that harbors criminals. There's nothing there but criminals" says Miller.

We found a number of people in and around the condemned complexes. People who scattered at the site of the camera.

State Representative Sylvester Turner also wants the crime riddled complexes gone.

"They need to be torn down like yesterday," Turner told city council members.

The city is suing the 130 owners of the abandoned apartments.

Courtney Rogers is one of them.

"It's devastating and it's embarrassing at the same time because that's not the type of person that I am. I bought so I could better my family. So I could invest and help other families" says Rogers.

He says he can't believe a once thriving complex he partly owns is now crippling a community. The apartments were abandoned about three years ago.

"Three years of a mess. Three years of a mess. Coming up here on Tuesdays trying to get council members to listen to us," said Rogers while at Houston City Hall.

Rogers is one of several individuals who invested in the complex.

The individuals say they are victims of a massive investment company out of California who took their money then abandoned the apartments.

The city is fighting in court in hopes of winning a judgment to tear the condemned complexes down.

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