



# FBI PRESS RELEASE

## NEW YORK FIELD OFFICE

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### **For Immediate Release**

**DATE:** March 28, 2014

### **FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE JUAN ELIAS GARCIA NOW IN CUSTODY**

**New York** –Juan Elias Garcia, wanted for the execution style murders of 19-year-old Vanessa Argueta and her 2-year-old son Diego Torres on February 4, 2010, voluntarily returned to the United States to face charges. Special Agents of the FBI arrested Garcia upon his arrival in the United States today. Garcia was placed on the FBI’s “Ten Most Wanted Fugitives” list on March 26, 2014.

In coordination with the Nicaraguan authorities, the FBI’s Panama City Legal Attache Office and the Regional Security Office of the U.S. Embassy in Managua, the FBI sent an aircraft to transport Garcia to New York. Garcia’s surrender was the result of an extensive and well coordinated investigation by the FBI’s New York Field Office, the FBI Legal Attaché and special agents of the Diplomatic Security Service assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua. Garcia is expected to be presented in the Eastern District of New York on March 31, 2014.

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office, George Venizelos said, “Juan Elias Garcia was placed on the “Ten Most Wanted Fugitives” list because of the heinous nature of his crimes. News media outlets, both domestic and abroad, displayed Garcia’s photograph to members of the public hoping someone would turn him in. The pressure generated by this publicity was too much for Garcia to bear, resulting in his surrender and return to the United States. While his surrender underscores the importance publicity can play in capturing a wanted fugitive, it is also a testament to the vigilance and dedication of the FBI agents and members of the Long Island Gang Task Force who never stopped looking for Garcia.” ADIC Venizelos thanked United States Attorney Loretta E. Lynch and the Eastern District of New York, the FBI Panama City and San Salvador Legal Attache Offices, the U.S. Embassies in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Panama, the FBI San Salvador Transnational Anti-Gang Unit and the Nicaraguan National Police for their assistance in Garcia’s return to the United States.

United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Loretta E. Lynch said, “Four years ago last month, Juan Garcia lured Vanessa Argueta and her young son Diego Torres to their deaths in the woods of Long Island. Since then Garcia has evaded justice for his crimes, but his days as a fugitive are over. As a result of the tremendous dedication of the FBI and their law enforcement partners, Garcia has been captured and will be returned to Long Island, where he will be prosecuted for the heinous crimes that he and his fellow MS-13 gang members committed. We hope his capture brings some measure of consolation to the Argueta and Torres families.” Ms. Lynch extended her sincere appreciation to the FBI and other law enforcement agencies who assisted with Garcia’s capture and return to the United States.

Garcia, a member of the violent street gang MS-13, was wanted in connection with the murders of Argueta and Torres. After a dispute between Argueta and Garcia, rival gang members

allegedly threatened violence against Garcia. When Garcia explained to fellow MS-13 members Adalberto Ariel Guzman and Rene Mendez Mejia, that he had been threatened by members of the rival gang as a result of information he believed Argueta had provided, they obtained permission from their leader, Heriberto Martinez, to retaliate against Argueta. On February 4, 2010, rather than go to dinner as planned, Garcia drove Argueta and Torres to a wooded area in Central Islip, New York. Once they were in the woods, Garcia shot Argueta in the chest and Mejia shot Argueta in the head with a .22 caliber handgun. They then turned the gun over to Guzman, who shot 2-year old Torres twice in the head. On February 5, 2010, the bodies of Argueta and her son were found in a wooded area in Central Islip, New York.

The FBI has legal attaché offices in more than 70 cities worldwide, providing coverage for more than 200 countries, territories and islands. Each office is established through mutual agreement with the host country and is situated in the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in that nation.

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