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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW YORK CITY POLICE OFFICER AND SIX OTHERS
ARRESTED IN TAX REFUND AND MAIL DIVERSION SCHEME

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, RONALD J. VERROCHIO, the Inspector-in-Charge of the New York Office of the United States Postal Inspection Service ("USPIS"), PATRICIA J. HAYNES, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division ("IRS"), JAMIE WOODWARD, the Acting Commissioner of the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance ("NYSOTF"), and RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Police Commissioner of the City of New York ("NYPD"), announced the arrests of New York City Police Officer JUAN GARCIA, JOSE ELIAS ALMANZAR, a/k/a "Raymond," a/k/a "Wilfredo Sanchez," a/k/a "Wifredo Sanchez," a/k/a "Hector Casado," a/k/a "Luis Maura," MANUEL LNU, GREGORIO LNU, MERCEDES LNU, GUILLERMO JEREZ-VASQUEZ, a/k/a "Guillermo Jerez-Vazquez," and RICHARD VLADIMIR BAEZ for their roles in a scheme to steal and receive from the U.S. mail hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal and New York State tax refund checks that were secured by filing false and fraudulent tax returns. According to the Indictment:

From June 2009 through December 18, 2009, the defendants received United States Treasury and New York State tax refund checks that were addressed to apartments in a residential apartment building located in the Bronx (the "Building"). The tax refund checks, netting hundreds of thousands of dollars, were issued as a result of false and fraudulent tax returns filed with the IRS and NYSOTF. Many of these tax returns were filed using

stolen identities of persons whose Social Security numbers were assigned to people whose mailing addresses, at the time of application, were in Puerto Rico. As part of the investigation, an undercover federal agent provided several tax refund checks to the defendants in exchange for payment.

GARCIA, 33, JEREZ-VASQUEZ, 51, and BAEZ, 31, were arrested on April 5, 2010, and were presented in Manhattan federal court yesterday and today. ALMANZAR, 40, MANUEL LNU, and GREGORIO LNU, are at large. The defendants are all charged with one count of conspiracy to steal mail and receive stolen mail and one count of theft and receipt of stolen mail. Each of these counts carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison, and a maximum fine of the greatest of \$250,000, or twice the pecuniary loss or gain derived from the offense. Additionally, JEREZ-VASQUEZ has been charged with one count of illegal reentry into the United States following an aggravated felony conviction. This count carries a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison and a maximum fine of the greatest of \$250,000, or twice the pecuniary loss or gain derived from the offense.

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of USPIS, IRS, NYSDTF, and NYPD's Department of Internal Affairs. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the Department of Homeland Security's United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Secret Service, and the Office of the Inspector General Social Security Administration for their assistance in this case.

Assistant United States Attorney DAVID I. MILLER is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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