



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER,
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**DEA
PETER CARPANINI
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 337-2905**

**NYPD
PAUL BROWNE
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(646) 610-8989**

**ICE
LOU MARTINEZ
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
(646) 313-2716**

**ACCUSED COLOMBIAN PARAMILITARY LEADER AND COCAINE
TRAFFICKER SURRENDERS TO UNITED STATES**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent-In-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Police Commissioner of the City of New York ("NYPD"), and PETER J. SMITH, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") announced today that JHON JAIRO RENDON-HERRERA, a/k/a "JJ," a/k/a "Yesid," accused of participating in the control of two "bloques" of the Colombian right-wing terrorist organization Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia ("AUC"), surrendered to United States authorities to face a charge of conspiring to import thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States. As set forth in the Superseding Indictment containing the charge:

The AUC is a Colombian right-wing paramilitary and drug-trafficking organization, designated by the U.S. State Department as both a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a

Specially-Designated Global Terrorist Organization. The AUC is engaged in conflict with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia ("FARC"), Colombia's main left-wing guerilla group, and seeks to remove FARC sympathizers from positions of power and influence in Colombia. To support its political and terrorist objectives, the AUC and its bloques involve themselves in narcotics trafficking, for example by "taxing" narcotics traffickers operating in areas under AUC control. JHON JAIRO RENDON-HERRERA assisted two of his brothers in their control over two such AUC "Bloques."

JHON JAIRO RENDON-HERRERA is specifically charged with one count of conspiracy to import narcotics into the United States, which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years. JHON JAIRO RENDON-HERRERA, 40, voluntarily surrendered to U.S. authorities in Panama and was transported to the United States by the DEA on July 31, 2009. He was arraigned on August 3, 2009, before United States District Judge LORETTA A. PRESKA where he entered a plea of not guilty to the charge. He has been ordered detained pending trial.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys BENJAMIN A. NAFTALIS and JOCELYN E. STRAUBER are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges and allegations contained in the Indictment are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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