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**INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKER AND MONEY
LAUNDERER SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that HECTOR DOMINGUEZ-GABRIEL, an international narcotics trafficker and money launderer based in Mexico, was sentenced late yesterday in Manhattan federal court to 20 years in prison. DOMINGUEZ-GABRIEL was convicted in December 2010 on narcotics importation and money laundering charges, after a seven-day jury trial. The sentence was imposed by U.S. District Judge ROBERT P. PATTERSON.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "The successful prosecution of Hector Dominguez-Gabriel puts an end to a prolific narcotics trafficker who went to great lengths to bring his drugs into the United States and clean his money on the way out. With yesterday's sentence, he will now be behind bars for a very long time.

According to the Superseding Indictment, evidence at trial, and statements made during yesterday's sentencing:

From 2006 to June 2009, DOMINGUEZ-GABRIEL orchestrated an extensive narcotics-trafficking and money laundering organization that imported and distributed hundreds of kilograms of cocaine into the United States and then laundered millions of dollars of narcotics proceeds back into Mexico where his company was based.

Working from Mexico, DOMINGUEZ-GABRIEL sent at least 300 kilograms of cocaine into the United States using a variety of means, including secreting it aboard cruise ships and in hidden compartments of vehicles, as well as hiding it within flower shipments. Additionally, DOMINGUEZ-GABRIEL directed his associates to pick up millions of dollars of narcotics proceeds in locations throughout the United States, including Atlanta, Georgia, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and New York City, and then make small, structured deposits into U.S. bank accounts.

This was done to evade the Internal Revenue Service's reporting requirements and thereby launder the drug proceeds back to Mexico. In February 2007, DOMINGUEZ-GABRIEL even attempted to bribe a federal agent after an associate, who picked up \$1.5 million in cash, was arrested in New York City.

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In addition to his prison term, DOMINGUEZ-GABRIEL, 40, was sentenced to five years supervised release and ordered to pay a \$300 special assessment fee. Forfeiture, to be paid to the United States, will be determined at a later date.

Mr. BHARARA praised the efforts of the DEA's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, which is comprised of agents and officers of the DEA, New York City Police Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, the New York State Police, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S. Attorney's Office. He also thanked the DEA Mexico City Country Office and the DEA Bogota Country Office. The Strike Force is partially funded by the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, which is a federally funded crime fighting initiative.

The case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys MICHAEL M. ROSENSAFT and BENJAMIN NAFTALIS are in charge of the prosecution.

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