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MEMBER OF MEXICAN DRUG ORGANIZATION SENTENCED
IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT TO 30 YEARS
IN PRISON FOR MURDER

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that CHRISTOPHER PEREZ, a/k/a "Cross," was sentenced yesterday in Manhattan federal court to 30 years in prison for the drug-related murder of MIGUEL ANGEL CHAIDEZ-ESPARZA, a/k/a "Noe Alfredo Castro-Loera." PEREZ pleaded guilty to the offense in April 2009.

According to the Indictment and statements made during the guilty plea and sentencing proceedings before United States District Judge NAOMI REICE BUCHWALD:

PEREZ and the murder victim, CHAIDEZ-ESPARZA, were members of a Mexican cocaine trafficking organization that supplied bulk quantities of cocaine to distributors in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and California. On August 23, 2004, PEREZ and co-conspirators met in Detroit with CHAIDEZ-ESPARZA, who was a Mexico-based member of the organization. PEREZ and his co-conspirators kidnaped CHAIDEZ-ESPARZA to question him regarding 70 kilograms of cocaine that PEREZ believed had been stolen from him. PEREZ and his co-conspirators then arranged for CHAIDEZ-ESPARZA to be murdered.

In the course of the murder, CHAIDEZ-ESPARZA was suffocated with duct tape and, later, his body was burned in an effort to destroy evidence and avoid identification of the body. A videotaped recording includes PEREZ describing the murder of CHAIDEZ-ESPARZA during a meeting with an associate; PEREZ was unaware that the associate was acting as an informant for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, agents of which were covertly videotaping the meeting.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force -- which is comprised of

agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department, and the New York State Police -- and thanked DEA offices in Detroit, Michigan, and Monterrey, Mexico, as well as the FBI's Los Angeles Office for their work in the investigation.

The prosecution is being conducted by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys ANIRUDH BANSAL and TODD W. BLANCHE are in charge of the prosecution.

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