



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Southern District of New York

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FORMER FARC GUERRILLA SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT TO 130 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JORGE ABEL IBARGUEN-PALACIO, a former guerilla for the 57th Front of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the "FARC"), was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge William H. Pauley III to 130 months in prison, for conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. IBARGUEN-PALACIO, his co-conspirator Yarlei Bañol-Ramos, and others were arrested in February 2008 following a firefight with the Panamanian National Police ("PNP") on vessels off the coast of Panama. IBARGUEN-PALACIO pled guilty in February 2011.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara stated: "Today's sentence marks another successful prosecution of a FARC member and deals yet another blow to this dangerous terrorist organization. Jorge Ibarguen-Palacio will now join his former co-conspirator and partner in crime Yarlei Bañol-Ramos behind bars."

According to the Indictment to which IBARGUEN-PALACIO pled guilty, the criminal Complaint previously filed in the case, related Indictments of other FARC guerillas whose cases are pending in the Southern District of New York, and statements made during the guilty plea proceeding:

The FARC is a terrorist group dedicated to the violent overthrow of Colombia's democratically-elected government. It consists of a highly structured criminal organization, styled as a military group with "blocs," "fronts," and "militias," as well as governing bodies known as the "Secretariat" and the "Estado Mayor." The 57th Front of the FARC is located in the Choco Department of Colombia, which borders the Republic of Panama. The 57th Front is involved in cocaine trafficking, and in obtaining supplies such as weapons, ammunition, and other items for itself and other FARC fronts. It also funds itself by kidnapping for ransom. IBARGUEN-PALACIO was a member of the 57th Front and agreed to work to further the FARC's terrorist activities.

On the morning of February 22, 2008, the PNP approached a boat off the coast of Jaqué, Panama that appeared in need of assistance. IBARGUEN-PALACIO, Bañol-Ramos, and others were on deck dressed in civilian clothing. While the Panamanian police officers were towing the boat to shore, IBARGUEN-PALACIO and other FARC members pointed weapons at the police. Other police boats arrived to render assistance and rescue the officers who were being held

captive. After an exchange of gunfire, which wounded at least one officer, IBARGUEN-PALACIO and his co-conspirators were arrested and taken into custody by the Panamanian police.

An inventory of the boat revealed that it contained four fully loaded AK-47 automatic weapons and one Galil rifle, over 900 rounds of live ammunition, military equipment, communication equipment, FARC uniforms, FARC encampment equipment, and explosives and detonators. The presence of cocaine was also detected in various sections of the boat.

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In addition to the prison term, Judge Pauley sentenced IBARGUEN-PALACIO to two years of supervised release and ordered him to pay a \$100 special assessment fee.

Bañol-Ramos was sentenced on September 16, 2011, to 15 years in prison.

Mr. Bharara praised the work of the DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force and the DEA's Panama Country Office. He also thanked the Fronteriza Policia, part of the Panamanian National Police, for their efforts and assistance.

This case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jeffrey A. Brown and Rebecca M. Ricigliano are in charge of the prosecution.

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