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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES EXTRADITION
OF FARC ASSOCIATE CHARGED WITH HOSTAGE-TAKING
OF U.S. CITIZEN**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN V. GILLIES, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the Miami Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced the arrival yesterday of ROQUE OROBIO LOBON, a/k/a "Roque Orobio Tobon," a/k/a "Mello," a/k/a "Tachuela," who was extradited from Colombia to face charges relating to the April 2008 kidnapping of an American Citizen in Panama by members and associates of the 57th Front of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia ("FARC"). OROBIO LOBON was arrested in Colombia in March 2009; he is expected to be arraigned by United States Magistrate Judge ANDREW J. PECK in Manhattan federal court later today.

According to the Indictment unsealed on September 28, 2009, and other court documents:

OROBIO LOBON planned and executed the kidnapping of an American citizen for ransom in April 2008 in Panama City, Panama, at the direction of the leadership of the FARC's 57th Front, including LUIS FERNANDO MORA-PESTANA, a/k/a "Virgilio Antonio Vidal Mora," a/k/a "Silver," and JULIO ENRIQUE LEMOS-MORENO, a/k/a "Andres," both of whom are also charged in the Indictment.

The FARC was formed in 1964 and is structured as a military organization, with approximately 10,000 armed guerillas organized into seven "blocs," 68 numbered "Fronts" (including the 57th Front), nine named "Fronts," and four urban "militias." The FARC is dedicated to the violent overthrow of Colombia's democratically-elected government and has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States Department of State. The 57th Front operates in the territory within Colombia's Choco Department, which borders Panama. The 57th Front supports the FARC's terrorist activities through narcotics trafficking and kidnapping for ransom, including the kidnapping of Americans and other foreign nationals.

On April 4, 2008 OROBIO LOBON and others kidnapped an American citizen in the Costa del Este neighborhood of Panama City. MORA-PESTANA authorized the financing for the kidnapping on behalf of the FARC. The defendants held the victim for ransom, which they demanded from the victim's relatives, informing the relatives that they would never see the victim alive again if the ransom was not paid. The victim was released in February 2009, after a member of the victim's family paid the ransom.

The Indictment also charges EDILBERTO BERRIO ORTIZ, a/k/a "El Gavilan," ALEJANDRO PALACIOS RENGIFO, a/k/a "El Gato," a/k/a "Yimi," and ANDERSON CHAMAPURO DOGIRAMA, a/k/a "El Tigre," a/k/a "Dairon," 57th Front guerillas who held the American hostage in the jungles of Colombia for ten months. BERRIO ORTIZ, PALACIOS RENGIFO, and CHAMAPURO DOGIRAMA, were arrested in June of 2009 in Colombia on extradition-related warrants, and are being held by Colombian authorities pending extradition.

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Each of the defendants charged in the Indictment is charged with two counts of hostage-taking, which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. The case is assigned to United States District Judge JED S. RAKOFF.

The arrest and extradition of OROBIO LOBON resulted from the close cooperative efforts of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the FBI, the DEA, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs, and the Colombian National Police.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "Roque Orobio Lobon is accused of planning and carrying out the kidnapping of an American citizen who was threatened with death by one of the most violent factions of the FARC, its 57th Front. The indictment against Orobio Lobon and his co-defendants describes the 57th Front's terrorist activities, including the procurement of weapons and explosives, and the cocaine trafficking which finances them. This extradition underscores this Office's commitment to pursuing the world's most dangerous narco-terrorists."

FBI Miami Division Special Agent-in-Charge JOHN V. GILLIES stated: "The FARC has waged a brutal war on the people of Colombia for decades, kidnapping and taking hostages for their own selfish aims. Outstanding cooperation between the United

States and Colombia were key to the success of this case. The FBI and its law enforcement partners, both here and overseas, will continue to work together to eliminate international organized crime threats."

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the FBI's Extraterritorial Hostage Taking Squad in Miami, DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, the Narco-Terrorism Group of the DEA's Bogotá Country Office, the DEA's Panama City Country Office, and the Office of International Affairs of the Department of Justice's Criminal Division, specifically its attachés in Colombia. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the Colombian Navy, the Colombian National Police, the Colombia Attorney General's Office, and the Panamanian National Police for their assistance in the investigation.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys JEFFREY A. BROWN and REBECCA M. RICIGLIANO are in charge of the prosecution.

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

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