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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 26, 2011

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**LEADER OF MIDDLETOWN, NEW YORK, COCAINE ORGANIZATION
SENTENCED TO 17½ YEARS' IMPRISONMENT**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, today announced that MARK COLON, 37, was sentenced in Manhattan federal court to 17½ years' imprisonment for conspiracy to distribute 50 kilograms of cocaine and distribution of cocaine. The sentence was imposed Tuesday afternoon, May 24, 2011, by United States District Judge COLLEEN MCMAHON.

According to the Indictment, the defendant's plea allocution, and evidence introduced at a sentencing hearing:

Between May 2009 and March 2010, a cocaine trafficking organization led by MARK COLON (the "Colon Organization") distributed large quantities of powder cocaine and cocaine base in the form commonly referred to as "crack." The Colon Organization regularly obtained a supply of multiple kilogram quantities of cocaine from Puerto Rico. The cocaine was transported to a location in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, then further distributed to locations in and around Middletown, New York, as well as in the Bronx and Queens. In and around Middletown, some of the powder cocaine was cooked into crack and further distributed in meetings in parking lots, homes, and vehicles.

MARK COLON oversaw the Colon Organization's efforts in obtaining supplies of cocaine, transporting the cocaine, and collecting the proceeds of the cocaine distribution. MARK COLON organized a group of co-conspirators who delivered powder cocaine and crack to a network of other members of the Colon Organization, most of whom were in Middletown, for further distribution. The Colon Organization temporarily stored drugs

and drug proceeds in locations in Middletown, Bloomingburg, and New Jersey.

In addition to the prison term, JUDGE MCMAHON sentenced COLON to five years of supervised release, and issued an order of forfeiture requiring COLON to forfeit \$1,750,000 as proceeds of his narcotics trafficking crimes.

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York State Police, the Middletown Police Department, the Orange County Sheriff's Office, and the United States Marshals Service in this investigation.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's White Plains Division. Assistant United States Attorneys BENJAMIN ALLEE and SARAH KRISOFF are in charge of the prosecution.

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