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**FARC GUERRILLA SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
TO 17 YEARS IN PRISON FOR TAKING A U.S. CITIZEN HOSTAGE**

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that EDILBERTO BERRIO ORTIZ was sentenced today in Manhattan federal court to 17 years in prison for hostage-taking and hostage-taking conspiracy in connection with the April 2008 kidnapping of an American citizen in Panama by the 57th Front of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia ("FARC"), a U.S. designated foreign terrorist organization. ORTIZ and his co-defendants, ALEJANDRO PALACIOS RENGIFO and ANDERSON CHAMAPURO DOGIRAMA, were convicted on June 20, 2011, following a bench trial based on stipulated facts. United States District Judge Jed S. Rakoff presided over the trial and imposed today's sentence.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "For the man who was held hostage by Edilberto Berrio Ortiz and his co-defendants, ten months must have seemed like a lifetime, and there is nothing that will compensate either him or his loved ones for the time they lost. But today's sentence will finally close the chapter on this heinous crime and hopefully give them some closure."

According to the Indictment, other court documents, testimony, and exhibits from the hearing and trial:

The FARC was formed in 1964 and is structured as a military organization with approximately 10,000 armed guerrillas. It 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. It 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, at the direction of 57th Front leadership, an American citizen was kidnapped in Panama City, Panama. ORTIZ, RENGIFO, and DOGIRAMA guarded the victim while he was held for ransom at a FARC jungle camp for approximately ten months. The ransom was demanded from the victim's relatives in the United States, who were told they would

never see him alive again if the ransom was not paid. The victim was released in February 2009, after a member of his family paid the ransom.

ORTIZ, RENGIFO, and DOGIRAMA were arrested in Colombia in December of 2009 and extradited to the United States in late 2010 and early 2011.

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In addition to the prison term, Judge Rakoff sentenced ORTIZ, to three years of supervised release. ORTIZ was also ordered to pay \$3 million in restitution and a \$200 special assessment fee.

RENGIFO and DOGIRAMA were sentenced by Judge Rakoff on October 24, 2011, to 15 years and 10 years in prison, respectively. Both were also sentenced to three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$3 million in restitution and a \$200 special assessment fee.

Mr. Bharara praised the investigative work of the FBI's Extraterritorial Hostage Taking Squad in Miami, the FBI attaché in Panama and Colombia, the DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, the Narco-Terrorism Group of the DEA's Bogota Country Office, the DEA's Panama City Country Office, the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, and the Department of Justice's National Security Division. 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 Rebecca M. Ricigliano and Jeffrey A. Brown are in charge of the prosecution.

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