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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES
OF COLOMBIAN GUERILLA FRONT WITH TERRORISM
AND HOSTAGE-TAKING OF U.S. CITIZEN**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, MICHELE M. LEONHART, the Acting Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), and MICHAEL J. FOLMAR, the Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Miami Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced today the unsealing of two Indictments charging a total of twelve members and associates of the 57th Front of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia ("FARC"), a Colombian terrorist group, with conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, and taking a U.S. citizen hostage.

The first Indictment unsealed today (the "Material Support Indictment") charges LUIS FERNANDO MORA-PESTANA, a/k/a "Virgilio Antonio Vidal Mora," a/k/a "Silver," JULIO ENRIQUE LEMOS-MORENO, a/k/a "Andres," who are leaders of the FARC's 57th Front, along with Front associates HAROLD RUBEN SEGURA ALVAREZ, a/k/a "John Jairo," a/k/a "Cientifico," JUANITO CORDOBA-BERMEDEZ, a/k/a "Juanito," a/k/a "Chechere," and CECILIO COSTA, a/k/a "Cesar Perea," a/k/a "Costa," with conspiracy to provide material support to the FARC. JUANITO CORDOBA-BERMEDEZ is in custody in the Southern District of New York. The Material Support

Indictment has been assigned to United States District Judge DENNY CHIN.

The second Indictment (the "Hostage Taking Indictment") charges MORA-PESTANA, LEMOS-MORENO, CARLITOS LNU, ALEXIS LNU, a/k/a "Alexi," FNU LNU, a/k/a "El Indio," ROQUE OROBIO LOBON, a/k/a "Roque Orobio Tobon," a/k/a "Mello," a/k/a "Tachuela," 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," for their roles in the kidnapping of an American citizen for ransom in April 2008. ROQUE OROBIO LOBON is currently being held by Colombian authorities. The Hostage Taking Indictment has been assigned to United States District Judge JED S. RAKOFF. MORA-PESTANA and LEMOS-MORENO are the only defendants charged in both Indictments.

The remaining defendants in the Material Support and Hostage Taking Indictments are at large.

As alleged in the Indictments, which were unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

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.

The Hostage Taking Indictment relates specifically to the 57th Front's April 4, 2008, kidnapping of an American citizen. MORA-PESTANA authorized financing for the kidnapping, and OROBIO-LOBON and others carried out the kidnapping in the Costa del Este neighborhood of Panama City. 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 Material Support Indictment recounts multiple discussions among the defendants regarding FARC logistics,

supplies, and weapons, as well as the seizures by authorities of a variety of weapons and material during February through September 2008. The Material Support Indictment also covers the aftermath of a February 22, 2008, attack by five FARC guerillas on a Panamanian police patrol boat and their subsequent capture in possession of substantial FARC weaponry and material. MORA-PESTANA and CORDOBA-BERMUDEZ in particular discussed the FARC's response to the event, and on February 27, 2008, a communiqué, purporting to be issued by a FARC element, warned the Government of Panama of consequences from its capture of the five attackers and that the 57th Front had been ordered to kidnap Panamanian officials to force an exchange of captives with the prisoners, if the prisoners were not released. Other defendants discussed plans to engineer the five guerillas' escape from a Panamanian prison. (Three of the guerrillas involved in the attack on the Panamanian police boat are now in custody in the Southern District of New York on charges relating to that event. Their case is pending before United States District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY, III.) The Material Support Indictment also recounts discussions concerning the April 4, 2008, kidnapping in Panama and efforts to impede that investigation.

Each of the defendants in the Material Support Indictment is charged with conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, which carries a maximum sentence of fifteen years in prison. Each of the defendants in the Hostage Indictment is charged with two counts of hostage taking, each of which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison.

"As alleged in the Indictments, the 57th Front is one of the most violent elements of the FARC. This group of guerrillas kidnapped a United States citizen, procured weapons and explosives, and trafficked cocaine to fuel the FARC's terrorist activities," said United States Attorney PREET BHARARA. "The charges unsealed today mark another important step in our efforts to combat international narco-terrorism."

"The increased cooperation between the United States, Panama, and Colombia that resulted in today's Indictments signal our shared, unrelenting commitment to combat drug traffickers and those who support them," said DEA Acting Administrator MICHELE M. LEONHART. "No country can tolerate vicious terrorist organizations such as the FARC. We and our partners in Panama and Colombia will continue to pursue the remnants of FARC's 57th Front until its members have surrendered or are captured."

Acting Special Agent-in-Charge MICHAEL J. FOLMAR stated: "The FARC is a terrorist organization that for decades has waged a brutal and inhuman campaign for its selfish aims. This case demonstrates the FBI's firm commitment to bringing hostage takers to justice."

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of 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 FBI's Extraterritorial Hostage Taking Squad in Miami, and the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs. 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 International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys REBECCA M. RICIGLIANO and JEFFREY A. BROWN 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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