

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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FORMER LACKAWANNA MAN SENTENCED FOR PARTICIPATION IN DRUG CONSPIRACY WHICH RESULTED IN MURDER

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Luis A. Diaz-Agramonte, 45, formerly of Lackawanna, New York, who was convicted following a jury trial of conspiracy to distribute, and possession with intent to distribute, five kilograms or more of cocaine and 50 grams or more of cocaine base, was sentenced to 35 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine by United States District Judge Charles J. Siragusa

Assistant U.S. Attorney Frank H. Sherman, who handled the prosecution of the case, stated that Diaz-Agramonte and his co-conspirators were involved in supplying multi-kilogram amounts of cocaine in the Rochester area in 2001 and 2002. Diaz-Agramonte, a Dominican national who was deported from the United States in April 1999, returned illegally in 2000 and began living under the alias of "Jose Luis Torres."

In addition to the evidence of narcotics trafficking, the Government also presented evidence that in late June 2001, Diaz-Agramonte and an associate recruited several individuals in Rochester to assist them in collecting an outstanding debt of \$40,000 for two kilograms of cocaine which was owed by an individual named Zoris Mejia. When Mejia did not make payment for the cocaine, Diaz-Agramonte assisted in the abduction of Mejia from a house in Rochester. The victim was first bound and gagged, and then taken to Buffalo in the trunk of a vehicle. The victim died during the trip, after which Diaz-Agramonte and his associates dumped the body in the water off the Buffalo waterfront. Mejia's body was discovered in the water on July 4, 2001.

The Government also introduced evidence that following the murder of Zoris Mejia, Diaz-Agramonte and several others participated in a series of robberies of cocaine and money from drug dealers in Houston, Chicago and Atlanta. The stolen quantities of cocaine were cooked into crack cocaine and distributed in Rochester.

U.S. Attorney Hochul stated that “this case demonstrates the willingness of this Office to prosecute some of the most dangerous and violent criminals in society. I applaud the efforts of AUSA Sherman and all of our federal and local law enforcement partners, and pledge to the public that we will continue to do everything we can to bring these brutal offenders to justice.”

The sentencing is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration under the direction of Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division, the Rochester Police Department under the direction of Chief James Sheppard, and Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero.