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PRESS RELEASE

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Guatemalan Man Indicted For Kidnapping U.S. Citizen in Guatemala In Crime That Resulted in Her Death - Accused of Abducting Victim in May 2010 -

WASHINGTON - A Guatemalan man, Jorge Moises Velasquez, 42, was indicted today on federal charges stemming from the kidnapping of an American citizen last year in Antigua, Guatemala, a crime that resulted in the victim's death.

The indictment, returned by a grand jury in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and John V. Gillies, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Miami Division.

Velasquez is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit hostage taking resulting in death and one count of hostage taking resulting in death. The charges stem from the kidnapping, and resulting death, of Magda Lubia Armas, 61, an American citizen, in Antigua, Guatemala.

According to the government's evidence, on the morning of May 12, 2010, Ms. Armas was returning to her Guatemalan home from a bakery when Velasquez and others forcibly removed her from the street and into his vehicle. On that same day, Velasquez and others made calls to the family of Ms. Armas, demanding that they pay 350,000 Quetzales, approximately \$43,669.50, in exchange for the release of Ms. Armas, the government's evidence shows.

Velasquez and others continued to make calls demanding ransom through May 14, 2010, the indictment alleges. Ms. Armas then recognized her captors. Sometime before May 17, 2010, Velasquez and others drove her to a bridge over a river in Escuintla, Guatemala with the purpose of killing her, the indictment states.

On May 17, 2010, Ms. Armas's body was discovered on the banks of the Guacalate River. However, she was not yet identified as Ms. Armas, and was listed as an unidentified decedent. On May 19, 2010, Velasquez and others resumed calls to the family of Ms. Armas, once again

demanding that they pay ransom for her return, according to the indictment.

On May 20, 2010, the family agreed to pay 21,955 Quetzales, approximately \$2,779.28, for the return of Ms. Armas. On that same date, the family of Ms. Armas dropped off 21,955 Quetzales at an agreed-upon location, the indictment states. Velasquez and another individual recovered the money and split the proceeds, the indictment alleges.

The family subsequently learned of the unidentified female decedent whose body was discovered on May 17, 2010. The family recognized her as Magda Lubia Armas, and dental records confirmed that the victim was in fact their family member.

The charges in the indictment carry a mandatory sentence of life in prison. Velasquez has also been charged in Guatemala with the kidnapping and murder of Ms. Armas, and is currently in jail in Guatemala awaiting trial.

“Mr. Velasquez stands accused of a kidnapping that led to the death of an American citizen in Guatemala,” said U.S. Attorney Machen. “This indictment demonstrates that we will not allow international borders to prevent us from seeking justice on behalf of American citizens.”

“With the cooperation of our domestic and international partners, the fight against crime has no boundaries,” said Special Agent in Charge Gillies. “The kidnapping and resulting death of Ms. Armas is a heinous crime and today's indictment is one example of the FBI's strong and continued commitment to investigating violent crimes against U.S. citizens abroad.”

An indictment is merely an allegation that the defendant has committed a violation of criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty in a court of law.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann Petalas, of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, and is being investigated by the Miami Field Office of the FBI. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs and the FBI's Legal Attache in San Salvador provided assistance. Assistance also was provided by authorities in Guatemala, including the Public Ministry National Prosecutors Office, Organized Crime Anti-Kidnapping Unit and the Investigative Division (DEIC).

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