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Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THREE FARC GUERRILLAS CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY TO  
SUPPORT A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent-In-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced the arrival from Panama today of ALEXIS FREDDY MOSQUERA-RENTERIA, a/k/a "Ronald," a/k/a "Ronal," YARLEI BAÑOL-RAMOS, a/k/a "Diana," and JORGE ABEL IBARGUEN-PALACIO, a/k/a "Turbo," who are charged with conspiring to provide material support to Colombia's main left-wing terrorist organization, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (the "FARC").

MOSQUERA-RENTERIA, BAÑOL-RAMOS, and IBARGUEN-PALACIO were arrested in coastal waters off of the Republic of Panama on February 22, 2008, after a shootout with the Panamanian National Police, and transferred to U.S. custody to face the terrorism charges. According to the Complaint unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

The FARC, whose Spanish name means Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - Army of the People, has been designated by the Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, and is dedicated to the violent overthrow of Colombia's democratically-elected government. It is a highly structured criminal organization, styled as a military group with "blocs," "fronts," and "militias," as well as governing bodies known as the "Secretariat" and the "Estado Mayor." The 57<sup>th</sup> Front of the FARC is headquartered in the Choco Department of Colombia, which borders of the Panama. The 57<sup>th</sup> Front of the FARC is involved in cocaine trafficking for the FARC and is also involved in obtaining supplies such as weapons, ammunition, uniforms, and

other items both for the Front itself, and other fronts of the FARC. The 57<sup>th</sup> Front also funds itself through kidnapping for ransom, including the kidnapping of foreign tourists traveling through areas controlled by the Front. MOSQUERA-RENTERIA, BAÑOL-RAMOS, and JORGE ABEL IBARGUEN-PALACIO, a/k/a "Turbo," the defendants, are FARC guerrillas and members of the 57<sup>th</sup> Front.

The defendants were arrested while manning a 57<sup>th</sup> Front patrol boat in waters off the coast of Jaque, Panama, after an armed confrontation with a Panamanian National Police maritime patrol. On the morning of February 22, 2008, a Panamanian National Police patrol boat approached the defendants' boat, believing it was in need of assistance. MOSQUERA-RENTERIA, who was the commander of the FARC boat, BAÑOL-RAMOS, IBARGUEN-PALACIO, and three crewmen, were on deck dressed in civilian clothing. While the Panamanian police boat was towing the defendants' boat to shore, BAÑOL-RAMOS pointed a rifle at the police officers, while four of the other FARC members also pointed weapons at the police. BAÑOL-RAMOS then jumped on to the police boat, and MOSQUERA-RENTERIA, BAÑOL-RAMOS, IBARGUEN-PALACIO and their co-conspirators disarmed the police and held them captive.

Other Panamanian police boats arrived to render assistance. After an exchange of gunfire, in which at least one Panamanian officer was wounded, MOSQUERA-RENTERIA, BAÑOL-RAMOS, IBARGUEN-PALACIO, and their co-conspirators were arrested and taken into custody by the Panamanian police.

In a search of the defendants' boat by Panamanian officers, explosives and detonators, weapons, including four fully loaded AK-47 automatic rifles, one Galil rifle, and machetes, nine empty AK-47 magazines and five empty Galil magazines, hundreds of rounds of live ammunition, military backpacks, communication equipment, and camouflage FARC uniforms with armbands, at least one bearing a sleeve patch marked, "Mario Velez, Compañía Ever Ortega," which is known to be a company of the 57<sup>th</sup> Front, were recovered. In addition, ion scans conducted on various sections of the defendants' boat tested positive for the presence of cocaine.

Following the arrests of the defendants by Panamanian authorities, on February 27, 2009, a communiqué was issued in the name of the head of the FARC's 57<sup>th</sup> Front, confirming that the defendants were members of the FARC and threatening that the FARC would take military action against the Government of Panama if those arrested were not released.

The defendants will be presented before United States Magistrate Judge ANDREW J. PECK in Manhattan federal court later today.

Acting United States Attorney LEV L. DASSIN stated: "This prosecution is another important step in our efforts against the FARC, a violent narco-terrorist organization whose goal is to destabilize the democratically-elected governments of Colombia and other Latin American countries. We salute the courage of the Panamanian National Police and the DEA, without whose efforts these guerillas could not have been brought to justice."

DEA Special Agent-In-Charge JOHN P. GILBRIDE stated: "These arrests mark another crack in the terrorism operations of the FARC and signal once again the commitment of international law enforcement to bring the FARC's pursuit of profit from peddling poison to an abrupt end."

Mr. DASSIN specifically thanked the DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force and DEA's Panama Country Office for their work in investigating the case. He also thanked the Panamanian National Police, specifically the Fronteriza Policia, the Panamanian Drug Prosecutor's Office, the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs and the United States Embassy in Panama for their assistance.

The New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force is comprised of agents and officers of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York City Police Department, the United States Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Department of Homeland Security United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the New York State Police.

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 Complaint are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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