



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**COLOMBIAN KINGPIN FRANCISCO GONZALEZ URIBE
PLEADS GUILTY IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that FRANCISCO GONZALEZ URIBE, a/k/a "Patron," a Colombia-based drug kingpin accused of trafficking tons of cocaine and heroin, pleaded guilty today in Manhattan federal court to narcotics importation and distribution conspiracy charges. GONZALEZ URIBE, designated by the U.S. Department of Justice as one of the world's most significant drug kingpins, was arrested in the Dominican Republic in 2009 and transferred to the United States to face pending charges.

According to the Indictment and other documents filed in Manhattan federal court, as well as statements made during GONZALEZ-URIBE's guilty plea proceeding before U.S. District Judge LEWIS A. KAPLAN:

From at least 2007 through 2009, GONZALEZ URIBE, 44, headed an organization that shipped thousands of kilograms of cocaine and heroin to various locations in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and other countries. The narcotics were then brought from these locations to the United States and various locations in Europe. Because of the expansive nature of GONZALEZ-URIBE's drug-trafficking activities, he was designated a Consolidated Priority Organization Target ("CPOT") by the Department of Justice, a list of the most dangerous and prolific narcotics traffickers in the world.

During two undercover operations in early 2009, the DEA succeeded in securing from GONZALEZ URIBE's organization a large quantity of heroin and cocaine. GONZALEZ URIBE was intercepted on recorded telephone calls personally orchestrating the shipment of these narcotics to New York City. The cocaine and heroin which was seized by the DEA during these operations had an

estimated wholesale value of approximately \$2 million. During the course of the investigation, GONZALEZ URIBE was intercepted arranging the movement of tons of cocaine through South America to the United States and other countries. GONZALEZ-URIBE was also intercepted attempting to purchase a number of large aircraft, including a DC-8 jet, for the international transportation of large quantities of narcotics.

GONZALEZ URIBE pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to import cocaine and heroin into the United States, and one count of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and heroin. Each charge carries a maximum sentence of life in prison, and a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years' imprisonment.

GONZALEZ URIBE is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Kaplan on September 23, 2010.

MR. BHARARA praised the outstanding efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration; the DEA Caribbean Field Division, the DEA Bogota Country Office, the DEA New York Field Division; and all other cooperating law enforcement agencies. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the Government of the Dominican Republic, the Dominican National Control Directory, and the Dominican Armed Forces, and expressed his gratitude to the Government of Colombia and the Administrative Department of Security ("DAS") for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation and prosecution of GONZALEZ URIBE.

U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "Francisco Gonzalez Uribe was once one of the world's most dangerous and prolific drug kingpins. He ruled a vast drug empire and moved millions of dollars' worth of cocaine and heroin intended for the United States and Europe. He has now been brought to justice in a federal courtroom in Manhattan. We will continue to work with our partners at the DEA to prosecute narcotics traffickers who pour drugs into our street and neighborhoods."

Assistant United States Attorneys RANDALL W. JACKSON and BENJAMIN A. NAFTALIS of the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit are in charge of the prosecution.

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