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**NEPHEWS OF FIRST LADY OF VENEZUELA FOUND GUILTY OF
CONSPIRING TO IMPORT COCAINE INTO THE UNITED STATES**

*Efrain Antonio Campo Flores and Franqui Francisco Flores de Freitas Conspired to
Import Over 800 Kilograms of Cocaine Into the United States*

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that EFRAIN ANTONIO CAMPO FLORES and FRANQUI FRANCISCO FLORES DE FREITAS were found guilty today of conspiring to import cocaine into the United States. Together with others, CAMPO FLORES and FLORES DE FREITAS agreed to distribute in excess of 800 kilograms of cocaine, knowing and intending that the drugs were destined for the United States. CAMPO FLORES and FLORES DE FREITAS were convicted after a two-week jury trial before U.S. District Judge Paul A. Crotty.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara stated: "Today, a unanimous jury found Efrain Antonio Campo Flores and Franqui Francisco Flores de Freitas guilty of conspiring to traffic in massive quantities of cocaine. As the evidence at trial established, the two men thought they would make millions of dollars sending hundreds of kilograms of cocaine to the United States. What they ended up with is a conviction in an American court and the prospect of years in federal prison."

According to the evidence presented during the trial:

Beginning no later than August 2015, CAMPO FLORES and FLORES DE FREITAS worked with others in Venezuela and elsewhere in an effort to dispatch large loads of cocaine via aircraft from Simón Bolívar International Airport in Maiquetia, Venezuela. In early October 2015, an individual who was cooperating with the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") in Honduras ("CW-1") reported to the DEA that a Honduran national had introduced CW-1 to two Venezuelans – later identified as CAMPO FLORES and FLORES DE FREITAS – who were interested in sending cocaine-laden aircraft with legitimate-seeming flight plans from Venezuela to Honduras. On or about October 3, 2015, CW-1 met

with CAMPO FLORES, FLORES DE FREITAS, and others in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to discuss sending hundreds of kilograms of cocaine from Simón Bolívar International Airport to Juan Manuel Gálvez International Airport in Roatan, Honduras.

In late October 2015, two confidential sources working at the direction of the DEA (“CS-1” and “CS-2”) traveled to Caracas, Venezuela, to meet with the defendants. CS-1 purported to be the Mexican boss of the drug trafficking organization with which CW-1 was affiliated, and CS-2 purported to be an associate of CS-1. At a meeting in Caracas on or about October 27, 2015, CAMPO FLORES and FLORES DE FREITAS presented CS-1 and CS-2 with a kilogram of cocaine, referring to it as a “little animal,” so that they could test the quality of the drugs.

In early November 2015, FLORES DE FREITAS met in Honduras with individuals acting at the direction of the DEA as well as co-conspirators, including co-defendant Robert de Jesus Soto Garcia, to further discuss the cocaine shipment. During the recorded meeting, FLORES DE FREITAS and Soto Garcia made precise plans for the drug load, and FLORES DE FREITAS agreed to send the first load of cocaine on November 15, 2015.

On November 10, 2015, CAMPO FLORES and FLORES DE FREITAS flew on a private jet to Haiti intending to pick up an initial multi-million-dollar payment for the cocaine. Later that day, CAMPO FLORES and FLORES DE FREITAS were arrested by Haitian law enforcement officers, expelled from Haiti, and flown to Westchester County International Airport in White Plains, New York on a DEA jet.

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CAMPO FLORES, 30, and FLORES DE FREITAS, 31, were found guilty of conspiracy to (i) import five or more kilograms of cocaine into the United States from a foreign country; and (ii) distribute five or more kilograms of cocaine knowing and intending that it would be imported into the United States, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years in prison and a maximum penalty of life in prison. The statutory minimum and maximum penalties are prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the judge.

Mr. Bharara praised the outstanding investigative work of the DEA's Special Operations Division, Bilateral Investigations Unit, and New York Strike Force. Mr. Bharara also thanked the DEA's Port-au-Prince Country Office, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol's National Targeting Center, DEA's Airwing, the Government of the Republic of Haiti and the Haitian National Police, and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs for their assistance.

This prosecution is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Emil J. Bove III and Brendan F. Quigley are in charge of the prosecution.

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