



U.S. Department of Justice

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: February 29, 2016**

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**FORMER PUERTO RICO POLICE OFFICER**  
**FOUND GUILTY BY A JURY FOR CONSPIRACY TO DEPRIVE A PERSON OF**  
**CIVIL RIGHTS**

SAN JUAN, P.R. – On February 26, 2016, former Puerto Rico Police Officer Francisco Martinez-Mercado was found guilty of Conspiracy to Deprive a Person of his Civil Rights, announced United States Attorney Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez. United States District Judge Francisco A. Besosa presided over the trial.

On September 15, 2015 a federal grand jury returned a one-count indictment charging Martinez-Mercado for the offense committed on or about September 23, 2010, when the defendant did conspire, combine, confederate and agree to injure, oppress, threaten and intimidate a known individual in the exercise of a right, secure and protected by the Constitution of the United States, to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by those acting under color of law, by agreeing to unreasonably search and seize property of the known individual located in Puerto Rico. At the time of the offense, Francisco Martinez-Mercado was a police officer with the Police of Puerto Rico (POPR) assigned as a Task Force Officer to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

During the five-day trial, the government presented evidence proving that on September 23, 2010, defendant hired corrupt police officers and other individuals to break into a home and steal property.

“Corrupt public employees undermine the fabric of our nation’s security, our overall safety, the public trust and confidence in those chosen to protect and serve,” said Rosa Emilia Rodríguez Vélez, U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico. “The corruption and negligence uncovered in this case cannot and will not be tolerated. We will continue to investigate and prosecute these types of schemes.”

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mariana Bauzá, Deputy Chief of the Narcotics Unit and Assistant U.S. Attorney Teresa Zapata. The defendant faces a maximum penalty of up to 10 years in prison. The sentencing hearing was scheduled for May 26, 2016. The case was investigated by the FBI's San Juan Division with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Miami Field Office.

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