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DHS to Expand Operation Caribbean Resilience in Puerto Rico

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DHS Press Office

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WASHINGTON—As part of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) continued commitment to public safety in Puerto Rico, the Department will expand Operation Caribbean Resilience. The operation, which focuses on interrupting and dismantling criminal organizations, as well as identifying and arresting individuals involved in criminal activity in Puerto Rico, will be expanded through September 2013 and will receive additional agents and resources.

Last July, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano traveled to San Juan, Puerto Rico to underscore the Department's commitment to collaborating with local law enforcement in the region. DHS is also working with stakeholders in Puerto Rico to maintain a coordinated approach to support the execution of the Operation. The Operation includes intelligence collection, interdiction, and other law enforcement activities directed at disrupting the flow of illegal weapons, drugs, money, and migrants into and out of Puerto Rico, with a focus on transnational criminal organizations and targeting violent gang members for federal prosecution.

Operation Caribbean Resilience is a joint initiative led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) with support from U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Coast Guard, including the Puerto Rico Police Department and the Municipal Police Departments of San Juan, Ponce, and Toa Alta. DHS is augmenting the local enforcement efforts with 30 additional HSI special agents and resources. Their efforts will focus on high intensity crime areas with a nexus to transnational criminal operations. Since its inception in January 2012, Operation Caribbean Resilience has led to 560 federal and state arrests; and the seizure of 470 illegal weapons, more than 30,000 rounds of ammunition, more than \$388,000 in cash, and various quantities of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and crack cocaine.

Operation Caribbean Resilience began in the municipality of Loiza, Puerto Rico, a town considered by law enforcement to be an area of high intensity criminal activity. Under Operation Caribbean Resilience, Loiza experienced a 50 percent decrease in homicides between January to May of 2012, as compared to the same period during 2011, as well as a 78 percent decrease in robbery and a 52 percent decrease in assault. The initiative was later expanded to the Caguas and San Juan areas where it experienced similar results.

DHS continues to coordinate its efforts with interagency partners in Puerto Rico, including the U.S. Department of Justice and the Puerto Rico Department of Justice to address violent crime on the island.

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