

United States Department of Justice

**For Immediate Release**

April 29, 2010 **United States Attorney's Office**  
**Southern District of California**

**Defendant Sentenced to Prison for Murder of Border Patrol Agent - U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol Agent Robert W. Rosas, Jr. was Killed While on Routine Duty on the U.S. - Mexico Border in July 2009**

SAN DIEGO—Christian Daniel Castro-Alvarez, 17, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge M. James Lorenz to serve 480 months in federal prison based on his guilty plea in the death of Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol Agent Robert W. Rosas, Jr., U.S. Attorney Karen P. Hewitt for the Southern District of California announced today. Agent Rosas was shot and killed on July 23, 2009, while he was on a routine patrol near San Diego. The defendant previously pleaded guilty to the murder of a federal officer committed in perpetration of a robbery.

U.S. Attorney Hewitt said, “Agent Rosas was tragically murdered in the line of duty as he protected the border and our nation. His proud career as a federal law enforcement officer stood for seeking justice and upholding the rule of law. Because of today’s sentence of imprisonment, the next 40 years the defendant serves in prison shall also echo those important principles—justice and the rule of law—for which Agent Rosas paid the ultimate sacrifice.”

According to the plea agreement, Castro-Alvarez admitted that during the evening of July 23, 2009, he illegally entered the United States for the purpose of robbing a Border Patrol agent of government property. While Agent Rosas was engaged in the performance of his duties, Castro-Alvarez and his co-conspirators lured Agent Rosas out of his vehicle for the purpose of robbing him. During the course of the robbery, Agent Rosas and the defendant struggled over a firearm and Agent Rosas was shot multiple times by the defendant and one or more of the co-conspirators. Agent Rosas died as a result of the shots fired. According to court documents, Castro-Alvarez was a minor at the time the offense was committed, and he voluntarily surrendered to the United States to face criminal charges. The defendant also agreed to transfer proceedings from juvenile disposition to adult criminal prosecution.

“This brutal act of violence on a U.S. Border Patrol agent cannot and will not be tolerated,” Acting Chief Patrol Agent Richard A. Barlow of the U.S. Border Patrol’s San Diego Sector said. “Although Mr. Castro-Alvarez has well earned this long custodial sentence, his punishment will never repay the debt he owes to those he has affected and who grieve the murder of Agent Rosas.”

FBI Special Agent in Charge Keith Slotter commented, “Agent Rosas was a brave man who gave his life defending our nation's borders. Without thoughtful investigative work and cooperation of law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border, today’s sentencing would not have come.

Though the death of Agent Rosas was tragic, I am pleased to see this individual brought to justice.”

The investigation was conducted by the FBI. U.S. Attorney Hewitt noted that the agents of the FBI San Diego Field Division deserve special thanks for their swift, professional, and comprehensive action in investigating Agent Rosas’ death. The investigation was assisted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection - U.S. Border Patrol, and the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department. The case was prosecuted in San Diego federal court by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michelle Pettit and Seth Askins.