

*Jackie Lacey*  
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NEWS RELEASE

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## **Man Sentenced to Death for Domestic Violence Murder of Ex-Girlfriend and Her Family**

A 32-year-old man was sentenced to death today for a triple-killing that occurred in Hawaiian Gardens in 2010, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

On Nov. 12, 2015, a jury found defendant Joseph Mercado guilty of 10 felony counts in case BA382849: three counts of first-degree murder, three counts of attempted murder, and one count each of first-degree burglary, shooting at an inhabited dwelling, arson of an inhabited structure or property and child abuse.

Jurors also found true special circumstance allegations of multiple murders, lying in wait and engaging in arson. Additionally, jurors found true special allegations that the defendant personally inflicted great bodily injury and personally and intentionally discharged a firearm during the commission of the crime.

Deputy District Attorneys Robert Villa and Franco A. Baratta co-prosecuted the case.

According to prosecutors, on May 6, 2010, Mercado set fire to his ex-girlfriend's home in Hawaiian Gardens. Serena Tarin and her family were inside the residence, prosecutors said.

Mercado then broke into the back of the home and opened fire with an assault rifle, prosecutors added.

Serena Tarin, the mother of Mercado's infant son, and her brother and their father were killed. Two others were wounded, one critically.

Following the shooting, as the defendant exited the house, he was shot by a sheriff's deputy and arrested.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

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## **About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.