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NEWS RELEASE

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**Antelope Valley Couple Indicted in Murder,
Torture of 10-Year-Old Boy**

In an indictment unsealed today, a woman and her boyfriend have been charged with capital murder and other counts for allegedly torturing and killing her 10-year-old son and physically abusing two other children, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Heather Maxine Barron (dob 9/29/89) and Kareem Ernesto Leiva (dob 12/23/85) both of Lancaster are charged with one count of murder with a special circumstance allegation of intentional murder with the infliction of torture on victim Anthony Avalos.

Barron and Leiva pleaded not guilty at an arraignment hearing this morning. They are expected to return on Dec. 3 for a pretrial hearing in Department 100 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

The defendants also face one count of torture involving Anthony and two counts of child abuse involving two other children in the home. The indictment additionally includes a special allegation that defendant Leiva personally inflicted great bodily injury upon one of the children in circumstances involving domestic violence.

Deputy District Attorneys Jon Hatami of the Complex Child Abuse Section, Family Violence Division and Saeed Teymouri of the Family Violence Division are prosecuting the case. The indictment, which was returned on Oct. 30, supersedes case MA074159.

The special circumstance allegation makes the defendants eligible for the death penalty. The District Attorney's Office will decide at a later time whether to seek life in prison without the possibility of parole or the death penalty.

Case BA464607 remains under investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Homicide and Special Victims bureaus.

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 protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.