

For Immediate Release  
February 7, 2012

**PICURIS PUEBLO WOMAN CHARGED WITH  
EMBEZZLING \$132,000 FROM PUEBLO**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in federal court in Albuquerque, **Norma Mermejo**, 53, a member and resident of Picuris Pueblo, was arraigned on an indictment charging her with embezzlement and theft from an Indian tribal organization. If convicted of this offense, Mermejo faces a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

Mermejo entered a not guilty plea to the indictment during this morning's proceeding. She was released on her own recognizance and conditions of release pending trial.

U.S. Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Mermejo is charged with embezzling approximately \$132,000 belonging to Picuris Pueblo between February 2008 and April 2010. According to the indictment, Mermejo was employed as a file clerk in the accounting office of the Picuris Pueblo when she committed the offense.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services, Northern Pueblos Agency, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul H. Spiers.

Charges in criminal complaints, indictments and informations are only accusations. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

###

12-42