



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Los Angeles Field Office
Jose A. Gonzalez, Special Agent in Charge

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Contact: Special Agent Felicia McCain, Public Information Officer
IRS Criminal Investigation
333 Broadway, 7th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 770-9317
Email: felicia.mccain@ci.irs.gov
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San Bernardino Convenience Store Owner Sentenced to 40 Months Imprisonment

Ordered to Pay Over \$6.5 Million in Losses from Conspiracy to Commit Food Stamp Fraud

Riverside, Calif. – Mohammed Ismail Hossain, 52, of Colton, was sentenced to 40 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$6,543,990.67 in restitution for his role in a conspiracy to illegally traffic in food stamp benefits. Hossain was sentenced on Monday by United States District Judge Jesus G. Bernal.

According to the Information filed on April 17, 2013, Mohammed Hossain and his wife, Maya Hossain, owned and operated at least six convenience-type stores in the San Bernardino area, which they used to engage in the fraudulent scheme. On June 4, 2013, Mohammad Hossain and Maya Hossain each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and one count of illegal trafficking in food stamp benefits.

In furtherance of the conspiracy, between May 2010 and February 7, 2013, the Hossains illegally exchanged cash for food stamp benefits. Pursuant to this scheme, beneficiaries would swipe their government issued electronic benefits cards – which were to be used only for the purchase of eligible food items – for cash, usually at 50 cents on the dollar. Over the period of nearly three years, the Hossains defrauded the government over \$6.5 million by illegally exchanging cash for food stamp benefits.

Maya Hossain, 50, of Colton, was also sentenced on Monday to 18 months imprisonment and ordered to pay \$6,543,990.67 in restitution for her role in the conspiracy.

The Hossains were arrested in February 2013 by Federal and local law enforcement agents, including special agents with the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation (IRS CI).

The case is being investigated by special agents with IRS CI and Department of Agriculture-OIG. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Allen W. Chiu and Victor A Rodgers of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California. For additional information about IRS Criminal Investigation, please visit irs.gov.

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