



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Two Identity Document Suppliers Sentenced for Roles in Identity Trafficking Scheme

Two identity document suppliers were sentenced to prison today for their role in trafficking the identities of Puerto Rican U.S. citizens and corresponding identity documents.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Blanco of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Rosa E. Rodríguez-Vélez of the District of Puerto Rico, Executive Associate Director Peter T. Edge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI), Chief Postal Inspector Guy J. Cottrell of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), Acting Director Christian J. Schurman of the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) and Chief Richard Weber of the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) made the announcement.

Francisco Matos-Beltre, 43, a Dominican national who became a U.S. citizen in 2013, formerly of Philadelphia, was sentenced to serve 51 months in prison and three years' supervised release. Isaias Beltre-Matos, 46, a Dominican national and legal permanent resident formerly of Providence, Rhode Island, was sentenced to serve 51 months in prison and three years' supervised release. Both defendants were sentenced before U.S. District Judge Juan M. Perez-Gimenez of the District of Puerto Rico. Beltre-Matos pleaded guilty on Aug. 10, 2016, to conspiracy to commit identification fraud and commit human smuggling for financial gain. Matos-Beltre pleaded guilty on Sept. 14, 2016, to conspiracy to commit identification fraud and commit human smuggling for financial gain.

According to admissions made in connection with the pleas, identity document runners located in the Savarona area of Caguas, Puerto Rico, obtained Puerto Rican identities and corresponding identity documents. Other conspirators, identified as identity document suppliers and brokers, located in various cities throughout the United States allegedly solicited customers for the sale of social security cards and corresponding Puerto Rico birth certificates for prices ranging from \$400 to \$1,200 per set. The defendants also admitted that the conspirators used the U.S. mail to complete their illicit transactions.

According to the pleas, Beltre-Matos admitted that he sold identity documents to customers, who generally obtained the identity documents to assume the identity of Puerto Rican U.S. citizens and to obtain additional identification documents, such as legitimate state driver's licenses. Some customers obtained the documents to commit financial fraud and attempted to obtain a U.S. passport, according to the plea agreement. Matos-Beltre also admitted to being a document supplier and that he bought and transferred identity documents belonging to real people to document brokers. Matos-Beltre admitted that he knew his customers would fraudulently use the documents that he provided.

The Chicago offices of ICE-HSI, USPIS, DSS and IRS-CI led the investigation, dubbed Operation Island Express II, with assistance from HSI San Juan and the DSS Resident Office in Puerto Rico. The HSI

Assistant Attaché office in the Dominican Republic and International Organized Crime Intelligence and Operations Center (IOC-2) as well as various ICE, USPIA, DSS and IRS-CI offices around the country provided invaluable support.

Trial Attorneys Marianne Shelvey of the Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Gang Section and Frank Rangoussis of the Criminal Division's Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section prosecuted the case. The U.S. Attorney's Office of the District of Puerto Rico is providing assistance in the matter.

Potential victims and the public may obtain information about the case at: www.justice.gov/criminal/vns/caseup/beltrerj.html. Anyone who believes their identity may have been compromised in relation to this investigation may contact the ICE toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE (1-866-347-2423) and its online tip form at www.ice.gov/tipline. Anyone who may have information about particular crimes in this case should also report it to the ICE tip line or website.

Anyone who believes that they have been a victim of identity theft, or wants information about preventing identity theft, may obtain helpful information and complaint forms on various government websites including the Federal Trade Commission ID Theft Website, www.ftc.gov/idtheft. Additional resources regarding identity theft can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/pubs/ID_theft/idtheft.html; www.ssa.gov/pubs/10064.html; www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/cyber/identity_theft; and www.irs.gov/privacy/article/0,,id=186436,00.html.

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