

September 5, 2012
Orlando, FL

21 individuals charged in "Operation Knot So Fast 2012"

ORLANDO, Fla. – Multiple indictments charging 21 individuals with conspiracy and/or immigration benefit fraud (marriage fraud) were unsealed Wednesday. The indictments resulted from an investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force, the FBI and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

According to court documents, Bethania Deschamps, 49, of Bronx, N.Y., conspired to recruit U.S. citizens to marry aliens so the aliens could fraudulently obtain lawful permanent residence in the United States. Lawful permanent residence status is an immigration benefit that allows an alien to legally reside in the United States. Deschamps received a recruiting fee once an alien and a citizen were married. An individual named Ender Rodriguez and the citizens also were paid fees by the aliens as part of the conspiracy. Rodriguez used marriage petitions to prepare and file fraudulent documents with USCIS on behalf of the aliens.

Rodriguez was charged during the 2008 iteration of "Operation Knot So Fast," an operation that targeted individuals who orchestrated fraudulent marriages in order to manipulate the United States' immigration system. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit immigration benefit fraud. On Sept. 30, 2008, he was sentenced to 33 months in federal prison.

Other indicted individuals include:

- Fayzullohuja Mavlonov, 32, of Denver,
- Jessica Santiago, 35, of Orlando,
- Marcelino Brizon, 41, of Orlando,
- Idalia Gomez, 54, of Orlando,
- Akmal S. Nosirov, 32, of Uzbekistan,
- Brienn Marie Lasley, 27, of Orlando,
- Mariya Baran, 26, Kansas City, Mo.,
- Eric Daniel Toro, 25, of Orlando,
- Abubakir Khidirov, 27, of New Orleans,
- Rosemary Torres Rosario, 26, of Kissimmee, Fla.,
- Marlon Jimenez, 43, of Norcross, Ga.,
- Edna Isabel Cosme, 41, of Kissimmee,
- Recep Aksu, 50, of Daytona Beach, Fla.,
- Grisel Ortiz, of 40, Orlando,
- Volkan Aksoy, 34, of Orlando,
- Gisela Cora, 26, of Orlando,
- Rustamhon Bahriddinov, 26, of Charleston, S.C.,
- Rachel Ruiz, 36, of Orlando,
- Avazhon Jafarkhojaev, 31, of Charleston, and
- Ixchell Bonilla, 28, of Orlando.

The maximum penalty for each violation is five years in federal prison.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1209/120905orlando.htm>