

IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY AND LEGAL ASSISTANT INDICTED IN  
FRAUDULENT ASYLUM SCHEME

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Defendants Allegedly Coached Aliens to Tell False Stories of Fear of Persecution

Greenbelt, Maryland - A grand jury indicted Patrick G. Tzeuton, age 41, of Silver Spring, Maryland, and Henri Marcel Nzone, a/k/a Henri Marcel Nzone Nguessa, age 43 of Spencerville, Maryland, for conspiracy to prepare false asylum applications, immigration fraud and obstruction of official immigration proceedings, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. The indictment was returned February 25, 2008 and was unsealed late yesterday upon the arrests of the defendants.

U.S. Attorney Rod Rosenstein said, "The indictment alleges that the defendants fabricated asylum applications and coached aliens to tell false stories to immigration officials. The immigration process is not supposed to be a game in which people gain U.S. citizenship by making up the most compelling story."

Tzeuton operated a law firm known as the Law Offices of Patrick Tzeuton & Associates (the "Tzeuton Law Firm") located at 8121 Georgia Avenue, Suite 102 in Silver Spring and 8401 Colesville Road also in Silver Spring, which employed Henri Nzone as a legal assistant. Tzeuton represented hundreds of clients as an attorney in immigration matters before U.S. immigration officials.

According to the 15 count indictment, from May 2002 to at least October 2005, Tzeuton and Nzone prepared false asylum applications, together with false and fraudulent supporting affidavits and documents, and presented them to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). The asylum applications contained false statements regarding (1) the alleged basis for the alien's fear of future persecution in his or her home country; (2) the date and circumstances of the alien's entries into the United States; and (3) the alien's marital status, spouse, and children. In addition, Nzone translated and notarized false and fraudulent letters purporting to be from the alien's relatives and other witnesses; and included false and fraudulent documents bearing forged notary stamps and signatures.

The indictment alleges that Tzeuton and Nzone submitted multiple asylum applications to immigration officials containing similar and, in some instances, nearly identical false and fraudulent affidavits and other supporting documents and coached the aliens as to the false statements in their applications to prepare them for meetings with immigration officials and appearances in immigration court. According to the indictment, Tzeuton and Nzone demanded and collected payments from aliens to prepare and to present the fraudulent asylum applications, to prepare and translate documents submitted in support

of the false applications, to prepare the aliens for asylum interviews and court appearances, to prepare and file appeals, and for other services relating to the false and fraudulent asylum applications.

The defendants face a maximum sentence of five years in prison for conspiracy; ten years in prison for immigration fraud; and 20 years in prison for obstruction of official proceedings. They had initial appearances in federal district court late yesterday. An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings. United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services' Office of Fraud Detection and National Security for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorneys Steve Dunne and Michele Sartori, who are prosecuting the case.