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## News Releases



NOVEMBER 29, 2012 ORLANDO, FL

### 4 more individuals guilty in 'Operation Knot So Fast'

ORLANDO, Fla. — Federal juries found three individuals guilty of marriage fraud and one individual pleaded guilty to marriage fraud after an investigation 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).

On Monday, a federal jury found Abubakir Khidirov, 26, of New Orleans, guilty of marriage fraud. A separate federal jury found Rustamon Bahriddinov, 26, of Charleston, S.C., and Rachel Ruiz, 36, of Orlando, guilty of marriage fraud Nov. 21. Rosemary Torres Rosario, 26, of Kissimmee, Fla., pleaded guilty to marriage fraud Monday.

These individuals were indicted as part of Operation Knot So Fast 2012. The operation targeted individuals who orchestrated fraudulent marriages to manipulate the U.S. immigration system.

According to evidence presented at trial, Ender Rodriguez, a leader in the fraudulent marriage scheme, arranged the marriage of Khidirov, who was unlawfully present in the United States, to Rosario, a U.S. citizen. The marriage was arranged so that Khidirov could fraudulently become a lawful permanent resident of the United States. During the course of the conspiracy, Rodriguez introduced Rosario to Khidirov. Khidirov then paid Rodriguez \$3,500 to arrange the marriage. In addition, Rosario received \$5,000 to participate in the scheme. Rodriguez used the fraudulently obtained marriage certificate to prepare and file fraudulent petitions with USCIS on behalf of Khidirov. Both Khidirov and Rosario attended a marriage interview and lied under oath that they entered into a legitimate marriage, when, in fact, they had not.

Ender Rodriguez also arranged the marriage of Bahriddinov, who was unlawfully present in the United States, to Rachel Ruiz, a U.S. citizen. During the course of the conspiracy, Bethania Deschamps, another individual involved in the scheme, recruited Ruiz to marry an alien and introduced her to Ender Rodriguez. Deschamps, who worked with Rodriguez, received a recruiting fee once the alien and the citizen were fraudulently married. As part of the conspiracy, Bahriddinov paid \$3,500 to Rodriguez for arranging the marriage and \$5,000 to Ruiz for participating in the marriage. Ruiz then used the fraudulently obtained marriage certificate to prepare and file fraudulent petitions with USCIS on behalf of Bahriddinov. Both attended a marriage interview and lied under oath that they entered into a legitimate marriage.

Bahriddinov and Ruiz are scheduled to be sentenced Feb. 28. Khidirov and Rosario's sentencing hearings are scheduled for March 14. Each individual faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison.

Twelve other individuals have pleaded guilty to marriage fraud charges as part of Operation Knot So Fast 2012. They include:

- Bethania Deschamps, 49, of Bronx, N.Y.,
- Jessica Santiago, 35, of Orlando,
- Idalia Gomez, 54, of Orlando,
- Brienn Marie Lasley, 27, of Orlando,
- Mariya Baran, 26, Kansas City, Mo.,
- Eric Daniel Toro, 25, of Orlando,
- Recep Aksu, 50, of Daytona Beach, Fla.,
- Grisel Ortiz, 40, of Orlando,
- Volkan Aksoy, 34, of Orlando,
- Gisela Cora, 26, of Orlando,
- Ixchell Bonilla, 28, of Orlando, and
- Edna Isabel Cosme, 41, of Kissimmee.

Ender Rodriguez was charged in 2008 during the first iteration of Operation Knot So Fast. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit immigration benefit fraud. On Sept. 30, 2008, he was sentenced to 33 months in federal prison.

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