

Foreign National Sentenced to Prison for His Role in Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Scheme

A Honduran national was sentenced to 24 months in prison yesterday for theft of government funds in connection with his role in a stolen identity tax refund fraud scheme, announced Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Richard E. Zuckerman of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney John R. Lausch Jr. for the Northern District of Illinois.

According to documents and information provided to the court, Elin Matute, formerly of Waukegan, Illinois, cashed fraudulently obtained tax refund checks issued in the names of identity theft victims. In total, the scheme involved approximately 200 false tax returns and resulted in an intended tax loss of over \$1.1 million. Matute cashed the checks at his bank and a local checking cashing business by claiming that the people listed on the checks were family members. Matute would then deposit the proceeds into bank accounts he controlled and would also send portions of the money overseas.

In addition to the term of imprisonment imposed, the court ordered Matute to serve three years of supervised release and pay \$630,498 in restitution to the IRS.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Zuckerman and U.S. Attorney Lausch commended special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation who investigated the case, and Trial Attorneys John T. Mulcahy and Gregory P. Bailey of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting the case. Zuckerman also thanked the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago for their substantial assistance.