



Department of Justice

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SIXTH NIGERIAN CO-CONSPIRATOR SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON IN NATIONWIDE IDENTITY THEFT AND IRS TAX FRAUD SCHEME

MEDFORD, Ore.—Oluwole Oluwaseun Odunowo, 37, of Houston, Texas, was sentenced today to 54 months in federal prison and three years' supervised release for his role in a nationwide conspiracy to commit mail fraud and aggravated identity theft.

According to court documents, IRS-Criminal Investigation began a lengthy investigation into the fraud scheme when, in May 2013, a victim in Medford, Oregon notified the IRS that false federal and Oregon state tax returns were filed electronically using her and her husband's personal identifying information including their social security numbers and dates of birth.

IRS determined the scheme required co-conspirators to amass a large supply of stolen U.S. taxpayer identities; obtain IRS filing PINs using victim identities; acquire prepaid debit cards in victims' names; use fictitious email addresses; file fraudulent tax returns and conceal refund proceeds by wiring cash to Nigeria. Fraudulent tax returns were filed using the identities of thousands of Oregon and Washington taxpayers. In total, the scheme lasted several years and netted co-conspirators more than \$11.6 million in fraudulent tax returns.

Using approximately 700 stolen identities he received from a co-conspirator, Odunowo filed fraudulent tax returns seeking over \$1.5 million in refund payments. These returns resulted in nearly \$403,000 in tax refunds paid by the IRS.

On September 6, 2018, Odunowo was indicted by a federal grand jury in Medford. On May 15, 2020, he pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit mail fraud, mail fraud, and aggravated identity theft.

During sentencing, U.S. District Court Judge Ann L. Aiken ordered Odunowo to pay \$402,846 in restitution to the IRS.

This case results from a joint investigation by IRS-Criminal Investigation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Homeland Security Investigations with support provided by the Department of Treasury, Inspector General for Tax Administration, the U.S. State Department, and the Oregon Department of Revenue Policy and Systems Unit and was prosecuted by Byron Chatfield and Gavin Bruce, Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the District of Oregon.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

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