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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**FORMER ACTING NEW YORK SUPREME COURT JUSTICE  
AND PARALEGAL FOUND GUILTY IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT  
OF OPERATING IMMIGRATION FRAUD MILL**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JAMES T. HAYES, JR., the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), announced that attorney SALVADOR COLLAZO, a former Acting Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, and DALIA PRELDAKAJ, a paralegal at COLLAZO's Bronx law practice, were found guilty late Friday following a fourteen-day trial in Manhattan federal court of numerous charges relating to their operation of an immigration fraud mill.

According to the evidence presented at trial before United States District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN:

From about 2000 to 2008, COLLAZO and PRELDAKAJ ran an immigration law practice out of COLLAZO's law office located in the Bronx, New York. COLLAZO and PRELDAKAJ prepared hundreds of fraudulent applications for amnesty and other related immigration benefits on behalf of their immigration clients and then submitted those applications to the United States Department of Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS"). The evidence also established that, in November 2005, COLLAZO falsely signed an amnesty application, under penalty of perjury, that he had personal knowledge of all of the information contained in the application, or that the information had been provided to him directly by the applicant, when in fact he did not and it had not.

The evidence further showed that PRELDAKAJ charged clients thousands of dollars for what she represented to her clients were fees charged by USCIS, which in fact were far in excess of the actual filing and processing fees associated with the applications that she prepared for the clients. PRELDAKAJ concealed her control of the proceeds of the fraud by depositing the money into nominee bank accounts that did not belong to her, but which she controlled.

Finally, in August 2009, while on bail following her arrest, PRELDAKAJ committed witness tampering by attempting to persuade a former immigration client to file a false claim against her in Bronx Civil Court that mischaracterized the money the client had paid to PRELDAKAJ for immigration-related work as a personal loan.

COLLAZO was found guilty of one count each of conspiracy to commit immigration application fraud, immigration application fraud, and false statements. COLLAZO was acquitted of one count of charging excessive fees in connection with immigration applications. PRELDAKAJ was found guilty of one count each of conspiracy to commit immigration application fraud, immigration application fraud, charging excessive fees in connection with immigration applications, money laundering, engaging in an unlawful monetary transaction, and witness tampering.

COLLAZO, 62, faces a maximum possible penalty of 10 years in prison for the charge of committing immigration application fraud, and a maximum possible penalty of 5 years in prison for each of the conspiracy and false statements charges.

PRELDAKAJ, 51, faces a maximum possible penalty of 20 years in prison for the money laundering charge; a maximum possible penalty of 10 years in prison for each of the charges of immigration application fraud and engaging in an illegal monetary transaction; a maximum possible penalty of 5 years in prison for each of the conspiracy and immigration fee fraud charges; and a maximum possible penalty of 20 years in prison in connection with the witness tampering charge. Finally, for committing witness tampering after being released on bail, PRELDAKAJ faces an additional maximum possible penalty of 10 years in prison to run consecutively to any other sentence of imprisonment.

Both defendants also face a maximum fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross pecuniary loss or gain derived from the offense for each count of conviction other than for money laundering. For the money laundering count of conviction, PRELDAKAJ faces a

maximum fine of \$500,000 or twice the value of the property involved in the transaction.

Mr. BHARARA praised ICE and USCIS for their outstanding work in the investigation.

This case is being handled by the Office's Complex Frauds Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys CHRISTIAN R. EVERDELL and LEE RENZIN are in charge of the prosecution.

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