



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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U.S. ATTORNEY PREET BHARARA

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Ellen Davis, Julie Bolcer
Jerika Richardson, Jennifer Queliz,
Mary Delsener
(212) 637-2600

U.S. SECRET SERVICE
Robert Engel
(718) 840-1132

DCIS
Bridget Serchak
(703) 604-8324

**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES ARREST OF
NEW YORK CITY MAN FOR \$8 MILLION IDENTITY THEFT AND
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS FRAUD SCHEME**

*Scheme Allegedly Compromised Over 1,000 Identities, Almost Half Belonging to
Members of the U.S. Military, and Caused Losses to Providers Including
AT&T and T-Mobile USA*

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Steven G. Hughes, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the U.S. Secret Service, and Kenneth Siegler, the Resident Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service ("DCIS"), announced today the arrest of AMADOU DIA for participating in an international telecommunications fraud scheme that used stolen identity information to activate fraudulent mobile telephone accounts and then make telephone calls to fraudulent overseas telephone numbers that charged a premium connection fee. The scheme allegedly compromised more than 1,000 identities – nearly half of them belonging to members of the U.S. military – and caused at least \$8 million in losses to mobile telecommunications providers including AT&T and T-Mobile. DIA was arrested this morning in Manhattan and is expected to be presented in Manhattan federal court before United States Magistrate Judge James L. Cott later today.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "As alleged, Amadou Dia and his co-conspirators dialed for dollars - many millions of them - by stealing countless identities, including hundreds belonging to U.S. military personnel, and racking up international phone bills in their names that left telecom service providers holding the bag. Identity theft is an epidemic

of global proportions and we are bound and determined to identify and prosecute those who engage in this illegal conduct.”

Special Agent-in-Charge Steven G. Hughes said: "This investigation is just one example that proves the power of agency partnerships in combating financial fraud and identity theft. This indictment and arrest should serve as a reminder to criminals that law enforcement will continue to pursue individuals engaged in stealing the identities of innocent Americans for financial gain.”

DCIS Resident Agent-in-Charge Kenneth Siegler said: "Today's arrest demonstrates the ongoing commitment of Defense Criminal Investigative Service and its partners in law enforcement to aggressively pursue these crimes and to support their prosecution to the fullest. As a team, we will continue to methodically investigate these allegations, work to ensure confidence in the system, and protect America's war fighters' identities."

According to the allegations in the Complaint unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

From 2001 through January 2013, DIA participated in an identity theft and international telecommunications scheme in which he and his co-conspirators obtained stolen identification information from individuals, including names, dates of birth, and social security numbers. He would then activate fraudulent cellular service accounts in their names.

Once the accounts were activated, DIA and members of the fraud ring would create SIM cards and insert them into mobile handsets. They then called premium international telephone numbers that they acquired and controlled, presumably to generate fees for the members of the scheme. The premium numbers were either dead when dialed, or simulated a ringing sound to appear as if a call was not yet connected. The premium numbers – the equivalent of 900 numbers in the United States – charged significant connection fees of as much as \$1 per minute that the international carrier then charged to U.S.-based cellular providers such as AT&T and T-Mobile. While the U.S. provider would normally bill subscribers for the calls, in this case the U.S. provider was forced to pay for the calls because the accounts were registered to identity theft victims. The international carrier provided a share of the fees to the holders of the fraudulent international premium telephone numbers, who are believed to be the members of the fraud ring.

Since 2008, approximately 3,400 fraudulent telephone accounts have been activated involving stolen identification information from more than 1,000 individual identity theft victims. According to records maintained by the U.S. Department of Defense, at least 450 or nearly half, of the identity theft victims targeted during the course of this scheme are active duty or retired United States military personnel. The scheme has caused at least \$8 million dollars in losses to U.S.-based telephone providers.

* * *

DIA, 49, of Manhattan, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, which carries a maximum of 20 years in prison, one count of conspiracy to commit identity theft, which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison, and one count of aggravated identity theft, which carries a mandatory minimum of two years in prison.

Mr. Bharara praised the Secret Service and DCIS for its outstanding work investigating this case. He also thanked AT&T and T-Mobile USA for their cooperation in the investigation.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Complex Frauds Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy T. Howard is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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