



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 27, 2011

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
***PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION  
ON PASSPORT APPLICATIONS  
LEADS TO FEDERAL PROSECUTIONS***

SALT LAKE CITY – Several foreign nationals have been charged with passport fraud in recent months after providing false information on passport applications.

“Many of these cases involve individuals attempting to obtain a passport using fraudulent documents or assuming the identity of another person. While some individuals attempt to obtain a passport as a means of employment identification in the United States, many of these individuals have criminal records, have been deported from the country on previous occasions, and pose a threat to the security of our communities. As part of our efforts to disrupt and deter terrorism, we must take these cases seriously,” U. S. Attorney Carlie Christensen said today.

Patrick Durkin, Special Agent in Charge of the Diplomatic Security Service San Francisco Field Office, said, “The Diplomatic Security Service is committed to investigating and pursuing anyone who applies for or obtains a United States passport using false identification documents. The U.S. passport and visa are two of the most coveted travel documents in the

world. There are foreign nationals who fraudulently acquire U.S. passports and visas to carry out criminal activities, including terrorism, inside our borders. These crimes threaten the national security of the United States."

Recent cases include:

Paulo Afamasaga aka Paul Afamasaga, age 32, of Magna is charged with passport fraud in an indictment unsealed May 3, 2011. The indictment alleges Afamasaga said he was born in Pago, Pago, American Samoa, when he applied for a passport in June 2009. Prosecutors allege Afamasaga was born in Western Samoa and is not a U.S. citizen. (Citizens of Western Samoa are not eligible for U.S. passports. Citizens of American Samoa are U.S. nationals and are, therefore, eligible for a U.S. passport.) The potential penalty for passport fraud is up to 10 years in prison. A three-day jury trial in the case has been set for July 11, 2011, before U.S. District Judge Tena Campbell. Afamasaga is custody on an ICE hold.

Martin Vasquez-Villagomez aka Juan Hernandez; aka Manuel Salinas-Vazquez; aka Francisco Jacinto; aka Martin Salva-Robles, age 35, of Roy, who is Mexican national, was charged in an October 2010 indictment with passport fraud. The indictment alleged he made a false statement in an application for a passport when he assumed the identity of someone else. A Felony Information was later filed in the case charging him with re-entering the United States after a previous deportation. As a part of a plea agreement in the case, Vasquez-Villagomez admitted that he was not a citizen of the United States; had been deported around June 19, 2008; and had re-entered the United States in February 2010. He also admitted he had previously been convicted of transportation of illegal aliens in California. Vasquez-Villagomez was sentenced to 43 months in federal prison in April 2011.

Misipope Elekana Soliai, age 31, of Hurricane, a citizen of Western Samoa, was charged in an indictment returned in December 2009 with passport fraud after he attempted to get a U.S. passport using a fraudulent American Samoa birth certificate. As a part of a plea agreement in May 2010, Soliai admitted he submitted a fraudulent passport in an attempt to obtain a U.S. passport. He was sentenced to 36 months of probation in September 2010.

Diva Azucena Ibarra-Rosas, aka Diana Torres-Ramirez; aka Diana Lopez-Ramirez, age 37, of West Valley City, a Mexican national, was

charged with passport fraud and re-entering the United States after a previous deportation. According to the indictment, she assumed the identity of another person in applying for the passport. Investigators opened an investigation based on several fraud indicators on the passport application. As a part of a plea agreement with federal prosecutors, she admitted that she presented a Puerto Rican birth certificate and Utah ID card in the name of another person when she applied for the passport. She admitted that she was not born in Puerto Rico and is not a U.S. citizen. She was sentenced in April to 60 months of probation.

Javier Ortiz-Luna, age 39, of Provo, a Mexican national, assumed the identity of another person to apply for a passport in February 2009, using a fraudulent birth certificate, a false Social Security number and a Utah driver's license issued in the name of another individual. An investigation started when a passport fraud prevention center noted several fraud indicators on the application. Diplomatic Security Service launched an investigation which ultimately led to Javier Ortiz-Luna. Ortiz-Luna pleaded guilty to passport fraud in September and was sentenced to 60 months probation in December.

Deportation issues following the criminal proceedings are handled on a case by case basis by the Department of Homeland Security.

The potential penalty for passport fraud is up to 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Indictments are not findings of guilt. Individuals charged in indictments are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty in court.

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