



Department of Justice

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Northern District of Georgia

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MARIETTA DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAMINER **CHARGED WITH EXTORTION**

Three Others Also Charged in Fraudulent Driver's License Conspiracy

ATLANTA, GA - GBEMISOLA WELLINGTON-SALAKO, 35, of Marietta, Georgia, was arraigned today on federal criminal charges of extortion, conspiracy, and working with three men to issue Georgia driver's licenses for \$2,000 to illegal aliens and others who did not meet the state qualifications for licenses. WELLINGTON-SALAKO was arraigned before United States Magistrate Judge Gerrilyn Brill, who granted the defendant a \$20,000 bond.

"Taking payoffs for drivers' licenses is not only a breach of public trust, but it also facilitates fraud and creates potential security problems," said Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates.

"ICE is committed to working alongside its law enforcement partners to identify corrupt employees who taint the government's image," said Kenneth A. Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Atlanta. "Through our investigative efforts in this case, we've neutralized a serious security vulnerability."

GBI Director Vernon Keenan said, "The sale of any official government document to those who are not qualified is a major public safety issue. This type of activity facilitates fraud related crimes that could impact homeland security."

DDS Commissioner Gregory C. Dozier said, "DDS will continue to monitor our licensing operations to ensure security and conformance to departmental policies and state law. DDS is committed to seeking full prosecution for all individuals involved."

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the indictment, and other information presented in court: WELLINGTON-SALAKO is a driver's license examiner at the Department of Driver Services (DDS) Customer Service Center at 1605 County Services Parkway in Marietta. The indictment charges that in April 2008, co-defendant JULES ARMAND CHE SIEWE ACHOU ("SIEWE"), 32, of Covington, offered to pay WELLINGTON-SALAKO \$600 if she would help him obtain a driver's license, which he could not obtain legally because he is Cameroonian and did not have legal immigration status in the United States. WELLINGTON-SALAKO allegedly agreed, and issued him a driver's license. Soon thereafter, the indictment alleges, she accepted SIEWE's offer to work together to issue licenses to people who did not qualify for them. According to the indictment, they agreed to charge \$2,000 for the licenses and to share that money.

Later, the indictment alleges, co-defendants NAMBALADJA SOULEYMANE FOFANA ("FOFANA") and MOHAMED CELLOU BAMBA a/k/a ABDERAHMANE TIRERA ("BAMBA") helped SIEWE find customers and, in return, they received some of his share of the money. FOFANA, 28, of Atlanta, is a citizen of the Ivory Coast who entered the United States on a student visa, and BAMBA, 32, of Atlanta, is a French citizen whose permission to be in the United States expired in 2003.

The indictment further alleges that between April 2008 and September 2009, WELLINGTON-SALAKO issued driver's licenses to approximately 40 people who did not qualify for them. According to the indictment, the four defendants were arrested on September 11, 2009, on state charges after WELLINGTON-SALAKO issued driver's licenses to two undercover agents in return for their payment of \$5,000. After Department of Driver Services (DDS) investigators were alerted to possible illegal behavior, DDS conducted an initial investigation to identify any illicit behavior. From that point forward, DDS joined with Special Agents from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force to further the investigation and ultimately conduct undercover operations.

SIEWE and BAMBA were arrested when they met to divide the agents' payment with FOFANA. SIEWE, BAMBA and FOFANA have remained in the Cobb County Jail on state charges since their arrest, and they are expected to be transferred into federal custody and arraigned on this indictment within the next few weeks.

The four defendants are charged with conspiring to affect commerce through extortion, conspiring to transfer fraudulent identification documents, and several counts of transferring or attempting to transfer fraudulent identification documents. The extortion charges carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. The fraudulent document charges each carry a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 per count. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

WELLINGTON-SALAKO, SIEWE, FOFANA and BAMBA were indicted by a federal grand jury on September 23, 2009.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment only contains charges. The defendants are presumed innocent of the charges, and it will be the United States' burden to prove the defendants' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the Georgia Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs, the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS), the Cobb County Sheriff's Office and the DeKalb County Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney William G. Traynor is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.