



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**UNITED STATES ENTERS AGREEMENT WITH ONLINE POKER
COMPANY REGARDING RETURN OF FUNDS TO U.S. PLAYERS**

*Agreement Will Facilitate Absolute Poker Returning Funds
to U.S. Players*

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that the United States entered into an agreement with Absolute Poker, one of the three online poker companies named as defendants in an April 15 civil money laundering and forfeiture Complaint (the "Civil Complaint"), alleging bank fraud, wire fraud, money laundering, and illegal gambling offenses. The Complaint, a related Indictment, and a related Restraining Order issued against multiple bank accounts utilized by the companies and their payment processors do not prohibit the companies from refunding players' money. And today's agreement will provide assurances to third parties working with Absolute Poker in its legitimate efforts to return funds to U.S. players.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "With this agreement, all three of the companies that allegedly engaged in the operation of illegal internet gambling businesses, as well as massive wire fraud, bank fraud, and money laundering, are moving forward with the process of returning the funds they owe to their U.S. customers. As with the other two companies we named in the Complaint, Absolute Poker has at all times been free to reimburse any player's deposited funds. This Office expects the companies to return the money that U.S. players entrusted to them. And as today's agreement continues to demonstrate, we will work with the poker companies to facilitate the return of funds to such players."

Under the terms of the agreement with Absolute Poker, the company agreed that it would not allow for, facilitate, or provide the ability for players located in the United States to play online poker for "real money" or any other thing of value. The deposit of funds by U.S. players is expressly prohibited. In addition, the agreement does not prohibit and, in fact, expressly

allows for, Absolute Poker to provide for, and facilitate, players outside of the United States to engage in playing online poker for real money. The Agreement also requires the appointment of an independent Monitor to verify Absolute Poker's compliance, and gives whatever necessary assurances to any third-party entities working with Absolute Poker to facilitate its return of funds to U.S. players. The Agreement does not provide for the restoration of the domain names used by Absolute Poker that had been seized as part of this case.

An Indictment was unsealed in Manhattan federal court on April 15, 2011, charging eleven defendants, including the founders of the three largest Internet poker companies doing business in the United States - PokerStars, Full Tilt Poker, and Absolute Poker (the "Poker Companies") - with conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud, money laundering, and illegal gambling offenses. The United States also filed a Civil Complaint against the Poker Companies, their assets, and the assets of several payment processors for the Poker Companies. In addition, a restraining order was issued against multiple bank accounts utilized by the Poker Companies and their payment processors. The Government did not restrain any players' accounts. Five Internet domain names used by the Poker Companies - pokerstars.com; fulltiltpoker.com; absolutepoker.com; ultimatebet.com; and ub.com - also were seized. As alleged in the Indictment and Civil Complaint, the Poker Companies collectively obtained approximately \$3 billion in proceeds as a result of their illegal activities.

Assistant U. S. Attorneys SHARON COHEN LEVIN, MICHAEL LOCKARD and JASON COWLEY are in charge of the civil money laundering and forfeiture actions, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys ARLO DEVLIN-BROWN and NICOLE FRIEDLANDER are in charge of the criminal case.

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