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**EIGHT CHARGED IN CONSPIRACY TO SMUGGLE STOLEN CARS
FROM THE PORT OF NEWARK TO SIERRA LEONE**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, KYLE A. HUTCHINS, the Special-Agent-in-Charge of the Newark, New Jersey, Field Office of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and ROBERT E. PEREZ, the Director of Field Operations, New York Field Office, U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP"), today announced the unsealing of charges against eight individuals for their participation in a conspiracy to smuggle stolen cars to Sierra Leone through a shipping company in Sayerville, New Jersey, (the "Shipping Company"). According to the Indictment unsealed earlier today in Manhattan federal court:

From at least April 2008 through September 17, 2008, MOHAMED FORNAH, UMU KAMARA, MUHAMMAD MUSTAPHA, SAHID KABIA, CHERNOR BAH, FATMATA BARRIE, MELVIN LEWIS, and ERIC HAYNES engaged in a scheme to steal cars from various locations in the United States, and then transport those stolen cars to Freetown, Sierra Leone. The defendants and others stole cars from individuals and car dealerships in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., including luxury cars stolen from car dealerships and at least one car stolen at gunpoint in Washington, D.C. The stolen cars were then

transported through Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to the Shipping Company, ultimately for shipment to Sierra Leone through the Port of Newark. In an effort to conceal that the cars were stolen, the defendants presented false and fraudulent title information to the Shipping Company.

The defendants are each charged with conspiracy to receive and transport stolen cars in interstate and foreign commerce. In addition, defendants FORNAH, KABIA, KAMARA, LEWIS, BAH, and HAYNES are charged with substantive counts of transporting stolen cars in interstate and foreign commerce. If convicted, the defendants face a maximum penalty of five years in prison on the conspiracy count, and ten years in prison on each of the substantive counts of transporting stolen cars.

KABIA is expected to be presented in Manhattan federal court before United States Magistrate Judge DEBRA FREEMAN later today, and MUSTAPHA and BAH are expected to appear in Manhattan federal court tomorrow morning. FORNAH, BARRIE, HAYNES, and KAMARA were presented in the districts in which they were arrested -- FORNAH, BARRIE, and HAYNES in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and KAMARA in the District of Delaware. The defendants, including LEWIS, who is currently detained in Philadelphia on unrelated charges, are expected to appear in the Southern District of New York on September 30, 2008, before United States District Judge GEORGE B. DANIELS.

FORNAH, 22, resides in Springfield, Pennsylvania. KAMARA, 38, resides in Newark, Delaware. MUSTAPHA, 37, and LEWIS, 52, reside in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. KABIA, 35, resides in Morristown, New Jersey. BAH, 40, and BARRIE, 34, reside in Glenolden, Pennsylvania. HAYNES, 31, resides in Darby, Pennsylvania.

Mr. GARCIA praised the work of ICE and CBP in this investigation.

The case is being handled by the Major Crimes Unit of the United States Attorney's Office. Assistant United States Attorney SEETHA RAMACHANDRAN is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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