



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 18, 2008**

**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER,
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**FORMER INTERNET GAMBLING SITE EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY
TO STEALING IDENTITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL
IDENTITY THEFT RING**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that PATRICK KALONJI pleaded guilty earlier today to charges stemming from his role in a large Internet-based identity-theft ring. KALONJI, who was employed by the offshore Internet gambling website BetOnSports.com, served as a source of information for an identity-theft ring engaged in stealing personal identity information from victims throughout the United States and using the information to commit various forms of fraud. According to the Indictment and statements made during KALONJI's guilty plea proceeding in Manhattan federal court:

KALONJI resided in the Republic of Costa Rica, where he was employed in the credit department of the Internet-based gambling website BetOnSports.com. KALONJI and his co-conspirators stole the private identity information of at least 150 victims from sources including the BetOnSports credit department. The stolen information included the victims' names, dates of birth, addresses, mothers' maiden names, social security numbers, telephone numbers, credit card numbers, and three-digit credit-card security codes. Victims of the scheme resided throughout the United States, including in New Jersey, Colorado, Texas, Florida, Arkansas, and California.

After stealing the victims' identity information, KALONJI then e-mailed that information to other ring members who then used the stolen credit card numbers and identity information to commit various forms of fraud, including stealing money from the victims' credit cards and bank accounts, making fraudulent purchases from various vendors over the Internet, and purchasing airline tickets for round-trip travel between Lagos, Nigeria, and New York City.

KALONJI pleaded guilty this afternoon before United States District Judge PAUL A. CROTTY and is scheduled to be sentenced on January 6, 2009, at 3 p.m.

KALONJI, 27, is a native of the Republic of the Congo and until his arrest, lived in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud and faces a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and thanked the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for its assistance in this case.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's Major Crimes and Computer Hacking/Intellectual Property Unit. Assistant United States Attorney MARCUS A. ASNER is in charge of the prosecution.

If you believe you were a victim of this crime, including a victim entitled to restitution, and you wish to provide information to law enforcement and/or receive notice of future developments in the case or additional information, please contact Wendy Olsen-Clancy, the Victim Witness Coordinator at the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, at (866) 874-8900 or Wendy.Olsen@usdoj.gov. For additional information, go to: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nys/victimwitness.html> on the Internet.

Additionally, if you believe you were a victim of this crime, the United States Attorney's Office recommends that you take steps to protect yourself from financial loss if you have not done so already. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in Washington has the lead role in protecting consumers from identity theft crimes and other frauds. The FTC's website, www.ftc.gov/idtheft, is dedicated to providing information on identity theft. We also strongly recommend that you contact the credit bureaus as follows:

Equifax	www.equifax.com	(866) 766-0008
TransUnion	www.transunion.com	(800) 680-7289
Experian	www.experian.com	(888) 397-3742

Please note that the FTC and credit bureau websites also provide additional information that may be pertinent to your situation.

08-232

###