



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Leura G. Canary  
Middle District of Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 17, 2007

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/alm](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/alm)

CONTACT: Retta Goss

Telephone (334) 223-7280

Fax (334) 223-7560

Cell (334) 546-1930

## **MONTGOMERY FEMA FRAUDSTER SENTENCED TO 16 MONTHS FOR ROLE IN HURRICANE KATRINA FUNDS CONSPIRACY**

MONTGOMERY, ALA.— A Montgomery woman, Litasha Washington, was sentenced yesterday to 16 month incarceration for her role in a wide-ranging conspiracy to file false claims for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance and for stealing funds intended for victims of Hurricane Katrina, U.S. Attorney Leura G. Canary announced today.

Washington was charged with and pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In total U.S. District Court Judge Marc Fuller found that Washington and others conspired to steal at least \$50,000 in money intended for Katrina victims. Judge Fuller also gave Washington a sentence increase because of her involvement in threatening a witness who was going to testify against Washington and another co-defendant.

Thus far, Washington is one of 23 defendants who have been charged in 21 different Hurricane Katrina and Rita fraud-related cases.

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Alabama is a member of the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, created by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales in September 2005 to deter, detect, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes. The Task Force, chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of DOJ’s Criminal Division, is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, and United States Attorneys’ Offices from the Gulf Coast region and nationwide.

This matter was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, with the assistance of the U.S. Postal Inspector Service, and the United States Secret Service. The case prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher A. Snyder.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721.

###