



Department of Justice

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CONTACT: DOJ TAX
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

CINCINNATI AREA RETURN PREPARER SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS

IN PRISON FOR PREPARING FALSE TAX RETURNS

WASHINGTON -- A former resident of Cincinnati was sentenced to 30 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Sandra S. Beckwith for aiding and assisting in the preparation of false client tax returns and for filing a false individual income return, the Justice Department and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced today.

According to court documents, Idrissa Bassoum began offering tax preparation services under the name Bassoum's Consulting Service (BCS) in February 2003, operating out of his residence and catering primarily to immigrants. Through BCS, Bassoum prepared and filed hundreds of false tax returns for clients which claimed fraudulent expenses and deductions relating to, among other things, moving expenses, all done to lower his clients' tax liabilities and increase their refunds. In addition to preparing false client tax returns, Bassoum fraudulently avoided the payment of any income taxes due on his business activities when he failed to report any earnings from his tax preparation activities on his personal income tax returns. As part of his plea agreement, Bassoum admitted that he caused between \$400,000 and \$1 million in tax loss to the U.S. government.

Bassoum's tax preparation fees were typically subtracted from the refund amounts he obtained for his clients after arranging for Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs), a short-term consumer loan secured by the taxpayer's expected tax refund. For each RAL approved for a client, Bassoum's tax preparation fees were directly wired into his personal bank account. As part of his plea agreement, Bassoum admitted receiving at least \$69,915 in unreported income during tax year 2004 and \$80,771 in unreported income during tax year 2005.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Beckwith ordered Bassoum to serve one year of supervised release with special conditions that he not prepare any tax returns for others and to file amended personal tax returns for the years of prosecution. In addition, Bassoum was ordered to pay \$44,887.80 in restitution, representing the tax loss caused by his personal income tax fraud, as well as a \$300 special assessment.

Acting Assistant Attorney General John A. DiCicco of the Justice Department's Tax Division and Carter M. Stewart, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, commended IRS Criminal Investigation special agents who investigated the case and Tax Division Trial Attorneys Jorge Almonte and Sean Delaney, who prosecuted the case.

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