



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Southern District of New York

U.S. ATTORNEY PREET BHARARA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, March 31, 2015
<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys>

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
James Margolin, Jennifer Queliz,
Dawn Dearden, Betsy Feuerstein
(212) 637-2600

FBI
Christos Sinos, J. Peter Donald,
Adrienne Senatore, Kelly Langmesser
(212) 384-2100

**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY AND FBI ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
ANNOUNCE CHARGES AGAINST FOUNDER OF NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION FOR DEFRAUDING PARENTS OF ABDUCTED
CHILDREN**

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Diego Rodriguez, Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), today announced charges against PETER SENESE, the Founding Director of the I CARE Foundation ("I CARE"), which advertises itself as a "self-funded non-profit organization dedicated to preventing child abduction and trafficking." Since at least 2013, SENESE allegedly defrauded parents whose children were victims of international abduction by falsely representing that he, working with the worldwide resources of I CARE, could rescue their children and return to them to the United States in exchange for money for his purported rescue operation expenses. SENESE was arrested this morning in Brooklyn, New York, and will be presented later today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Gabriel W. Gorenstein.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "As alleged, Peter Senese fed a pack of lies to desperate parents by telling them, among other things, that he and his company could, for a price, locate and recover their internationally kidnapped children. In fact, he could do no such thing, but that didn't stop him from allegedly repeatedly reaching out to the parents for more money to fund his non-existent rescue mission. This type of alleged fraud that preys on the especially vulnerable and desperate is a top priority for us, and we will work to ensure those who commit these outrageous crimes are held to strict account."

FBI Assistant Director Diego Rodriguez said: "As alleged, Senese's supposed self-funded corporation to prevent child abduction and trafficking turned out to be nothing more than a ruse. He allegedly preyed on the anguish of suffering families, left them open to be victimized a second time, and accepted their payments to fund his personal venture without ever having access to the worldwide resources of which he spoke. Fortunately, his journey ends today. The FBI and our law enforcement partners often work hand in hand on cases involving the mysterious disappearance of a child, and we will continue to protect the welfare of those faced with this terrible tragedy. "

According to the allegations in the Complaint filed today in Manhattan federal court:

Through his websites (www.stopchildabduction.org and www.petersenese.com) and elsewhere, SENESE promotes I CARE as “a self-funded not-for-profit 501-C-3[sic] corporation” that “does not accept outside financial contributions and has reunited numerous internationally kidnapped children while preventing an exponentially larger number of children from abduction.” SENESE also represents that I CARE includes “some of the leading figures in the world dedicated to protecting children from abduction and trafficking” and that “there have been many, many children of international parental child abduction who have been reunited and returned home due directly to the great efforts, financial, legal, and investigative resources” of I CARE.

Between at least November 2013 and February 2015, SENESE specifically represented to victims that he could recover their children from other countries by working with a team of former members of the U.S. Army component Delta Force (“Delta Force”), of which SENESE claimed to have also been a member. SENESE repeatedly represented to one victim (“V-1”) that he could recover V-1’s child (“Child-1”) from India in a matter of weeks, but that he needed a few thousand dollars from V-1 to cover his operational expenses. In the months that followed, SENESE repeatedly represented that he was very close to recovering Child-1, appeared on a local radio program with V-1, and sent numerous text messages and emails stating, in part, that he was either in India or an unspecified “remote location” and that Child-1 would be returned to the United States in a matter of hours or days. During the same period, SENESE repeatedly asked for additional funds, typically ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per month to cover his operational expenses.

In fact, SENESE has not traveled outside of the country for years. While SENESE represented that he was in foreign locations, he was actually in Miami, Florida; New York, New York; or Los Angeles, California. SENESE also has never had any affiliation with the United States military, and the children SENESE promised to recover have not been recovered.

* * *

SENESE, 49, of Brooklyn, New York, is charged with one count of wire fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The statutory maximum sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

Mr. Bharara praised the outstanding work of the FBI for its investigative efforts and ongoing support and assistance with the case.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office’s General Crimes Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jaimie L. Nawaday is in charge of the case.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.