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MAN SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS IN TAX REFUND SCHEME

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott and IRS Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge, Victor Song, announced today that NORBERTO TORRES RAMOS, 32, of Terra Bella, was sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Anthony W. Ishii in Fresno in connection with an illegal tax refund scheme. NORBERTO TORRES RAMOS was sentenced to 30 months in custody, to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release and an assessment of \$100.

NORBERTO TORRES RAMOS admitted that in furtherance of the scheme to defraud the IRS, he submitted false tax returns and Forms W-2 to the IRS. RAMOS knew that none of the individuals named on the tax returns and Forms W-2 worked in the United States for the companies shown on the Forms W-2 as the employer, and that the tax returns and the Forms W-2 he submitted to the IRS were false. RAMOS also rented, or had access to, numerous post office boxes in Richgrove, Terra Bella, and Ducor which were used as addresses on false tax returns, and which were used to receive false refund checks. RAMOS cashed the false tax refund checks that were mailed to his post office boxes, and the false tax refund checks that were mailed to his co-defendants' JAMIE TORRES and ROGELIO TORRES's post office boxes. JAMIE and ROGELIO TORRES are RAMOS's brothers-in-law. RAMOS cashed these refund checks at several check cashing locations, using aliases to cash some of the refund checks.

RAMOS knew that the refund checks were made out to fictitious workers who had not worked in the United States, who had no federal income tax withholdings, and who were not entitled to any tax refunds from the United States. RAMOS also knew that the claims resulting in the tax refund checks were false.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Mark Cullers, Sheila K. Oberto, and E. Robert Wright who prosecuted the case, the case was part of a crackdown by the IRS on numerous tax refund schemes operating in the Central Valley. The schemes consisted of individuals who submitted false 1040 Individual Income Tax Returns to the Internal Revenue Service in order to receive false refund checks. As a result of the schemes, more than \$13.3 million in false claims for refunds have been submitted to the Internal Revenue Service. Due to the investigative efforts of the Criminal Investigative Division of the Internal Revenue Service, the government has prevented the payment of approximately \$10 million in false claims for refunds.

According to SAC Victor Song, "These cases represent a significant priority for IRS. We

are committed to working with the US Attorney's Office to combat false tax return schemes such as this."

This case was the result of an investigation by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service.

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