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THREE PERSONS SENTENCED IN TAX REFUND SCHEME

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott and IRS Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge, Victor Song, announced today that ANTONIO LEON TORRES, 23, of Selma, and ROBERTO TORRES RODRIGUEZ, 50, and his wife, MARIA INEZ PEREZ DE TORRES, 50, both of Terra Bella, were sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Anthony W. Ishii in Fresno in connection with an illegal tax refund scheme. ANTONIO LEON TORRES, was sentenced to 24 months in custody, to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release and an assessment of \$100. ROBERTO TORRES RODRIGUEZ was sentenced to 24 months in custody, to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release and an assessment of \$100. His wife, MARIA INEZ PEREZ DE TORRES, was sentenced to 21 months in custody, to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release and an assessment of \$100.

ANTONIO LEON TORRES admitted that in furtherance of the scheme to defraud the Internal Revenue Service, he obtained Mexican Voter Registration cards from Mexico. Using those, he obtained information from the IRS which he used to prepare false tax returns and false Forms W-2. He mailed the false tax returns to the IRS. TORRES admitted to knowing 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 also admitted that the tax returns and Forms W-2 he submitted to the IRS were false.

ROBERTO TORRES RODRIGUEZ and his wife, MARIA INEZ PEREZ DE TORRES, admitted that they rented, or had access to numerous post office boxes in Terra Bella and Ducor, which were all used for the purpose of receiving false tax refund checks. Both defendants admitted to knowing that the tax refund checks which were sent to those post office boxes were false. In connection with their guilty pleas, ROBERTO TORRES RODRIGUEZ and MARIA INEZ PEREZ DE TORRES agreed not to contest the civil forfeiture of real property in Terra Bella which is in their names and which was purchased with proceeds of false tax refund checks. ROBERTO TORRES RODRIGUEZ also agreed not to contest the civil forfeiture of another real property in Terra Bella in his name and which was also purchased with proceeds of false tax refund checks.

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 a result of the crackdown, 12 individuals have pled guilty.

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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