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EL PASO WOMAN ARRESTED FOR IMPERSONATING AN IRS EMPLOYEE

(EL PASO, TEXAS) United States Attorney Johnny Sutton, Special Agent in Charge Dan Parfitt of the Office of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, Special Agent in Charge Enrique Fasci of the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation and Special Agent in Charge Hardrick Crawford of the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced today the arrest of 35-year-old **NORMA PATRICIA BANUELAS** of El Paso. Banuelas is charged in a federal criminal complaint with falsely representing herself to be an employee of the Internal Revenue Service. Banuelas is scheduled to have her initial appearance at 2:30 today before United States Magistrate Judge Richard Mesa.

The complaint alleges that over the past four years Banuelas claimed to be an IRS employee as a lure to get taxpayers to hire her to prepare their federal income tax returns and collect protection money from taxpayers to keep them out of trouble with the IRS. Banuelas has never been an employee of the IRS. As a result of her scheme, authorities estimate that Banuelas collected over \$100,000 in cash and non-monetary compensation.

If convicted, Banuelas faces up to three years in federal prison. A criminal complaint is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, Office of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration and Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Margaret Leachman is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

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