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EIGHT INDIVIDUALS INDICTED AND ARRESTED FOR IDENTITY THEFT

SAN JUAN, P.R. - Yesterday, a grand jury returned five indictments, one of which remains sealed, charging seven (7) men and one (1) woman with identity theft, aggravated identity theft and Social Security Fraud. Law enforcement agencies arrested these individuals this morning, announced U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez. The investigation of this case involved the recent wave of burglaries and thefts of "identification documents" and "means of identification" from approximately fifty (50) of Puerto Rico's public schools.

Since 2007, Puerto Rico's public schools became the target of thieves looking to steal identification documents belonging to United States citizens. The types of documents stolen include originals as well as copies of birth certificates and social security cards. The purpose of stealing these documents was to sell the information to buyers, including buyers in the states of Texas, Alaska and California, interested in using the identities of United States citizens.

The indictments allege that since April of 2008, the defendants Fnu Lnu, aka "Daniel," Casimiro Nunez-Polanco, aka "Pupi," Orlando Negrón-Colón, Miguel Negrón-Alvarado, Francisco Miranda-Guzmán, Ovel Cruz-Pérez, aka Obelito," aka "Jancarlo Norberto-Santos", aka "Pedro Alayon," aka "Carlos Cruz-Larroig," and Yanilka Jiménez-González, aka "Stephanie Pena-Medina," aka "Francisca Villaman;" have been involved in the unlawful transfer and possession of social security cards, birth certificates, passports, copies of social security cards and birth certificates, as well as fake Puerto Rico drivers licenses.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to protecting the privacy and identity of the citizens of Puerto Rico. The joint efforts of the federal and local law enforcement agencies participating in this investigation lead to the arrests of these individuals, some of whom

possessed stolen records from Puerto Rico public schools and subsequently sold these identification documents," said United States Attorney Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez.

"Identity theft is now a worldwide problem, people must take the necessary steps to safeguard their identity," said Luis Fraticelli, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI-San Juan Field Office. "Here are just a few security tips: be careful when providing personal information over the telephone or the internet; shred personal documents, such as credit card statements, utility bills, etc.; order a free copy of your credit report once a year; and only carry essential identification cards. "If you are a victim of identity theft, please call the FBI at (787) 754-6000 or 1-877-324-7577 (1-877-FBI-SJPR)."

"Your identity in the United States is not for sale" said Manuel Oyola Torres, special agent in charge of ICE's Office of Investigations in Puerto Rico. "The arrests today of these individuals reflect the continued law enforcement efforts by ICE and our law enforcement partners to dismantle organizations and prosecute individuals who perpetrate fraud that put our nation at risk. We are committed to ensure that our nation's security is not breached in this manner."

Special Agent in Charge Edward J. Ryan, Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General said: "The Office of the Inspector General is the law enforcement arm of the Social Security Administration. This Office is responsible for the protection of SSA programs from fraud, waste and abuse as well as to preserve the integrity of the Social Security number. This cooperative investigation illustrates our Office's dedication to the aggressive pursuit of any criminal enterprise which engages in the intentional trafficking and misuse of the Social Security number. We will continue our strides with other law enforcement to prevent the misuse of Social Security numbers for personal financial gain."

"The mission of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, is to protect the U.S. Postal Service, secure the nation's mail system and ensure public trust in the mail," said Eliezer Julián, Acting Assistant Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, San Juan Field Office. "Postal Inspectors assigned to the San Juan Field Office are charged with this task and ensure the island mail system is one of the most secure means of transmitting personal information."

"The Diplomatic Security Service is firmly committed to working with our law enforcement partners to investigate visa, passport, and other document fraud, and to bring to justice those who commit these crimes," said Maurice A. Brungardt, Resident Agent In Charge of Diplomatic Security's San Juan Resident Office. "Such crimes can be related to criminal or terrorist organizations and pose a potential threat to the national security of the United States."

"This case highlights the diligent work of this team and its dogged pursuit of those who stole the identities of the most innocent of victims – Puerto Rico's school children," said Mary Mitchelson, Acting Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Education. "We're proud to be a part of this effort."

If convicted, the defendants face a maximum of 15 years imprisonment, three years of supervised release, with fines of up to \$250,000 dollars.

This joint investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Secret Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Department of Education-Office of Inspector General (OIG), the U.S. Social Security Administration OIG, the U.S. Diplomatic Security Services and the Police of Puerto Rico . The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Julia Díaz-Rex and Marshal Morgan.

Criminal indictments are only charges and not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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