

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or
MARCIA MURPHY at 410-209-4885****SEPTEMBER 14, 2007****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/md>

**NORTH CAROLINA MAN SENTENCED TO OVER FOUR YEARS FOR FRAUDULENTLY
OBTAINING OVER \$725,000 IN STATE TAX REFUNDS FROM 12 STATES***Identity Fraud Scheme Used State Tax Returns*

Baltimore, Maryland - U.S. District Judge William D. Quarles, Jr. sentenced Chika Milford Mokwunye, age 43, of Greensboro, North Carolina, today to 51 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release for mail fraud in connection with a scheme to defraud state governments by filing false state income tax returns in 12 states, including Maryland, to obtain tax refunds, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Judge Quarles also ordered Mokwunye to pay restitution of \$750,929.00.

According to his guilty plea, from March 2004 to April 2006, Mokwunye assumed the identities of individuals after obtaining their personal information and filed false tax returns in their names in Maryland and other states. Mokwunye listed false employment, income and deductions on the returns to give the appearance that the taxpayers had overpaid income taxes, thereby causing the state governments to issue refund checks. To receive the tax refunds Mokwunye rented private mailboxes as the mailing addresses for the taxpayers.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended the U.S. Postal Inspection Service for its investigative work in this case and thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Martin J. Clarke, who prosecuted the case.

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