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## **PRISON SENTENCE IMPOSED FOR DEFRAUDING STATE OF LOUISIANA OF TAXES OWED ON CIGARS AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

**Alexandria, Louisiana** . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that **OMAR JAMIL SALAM**, age 40, of Alexandria, Louisiana, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Dee D. Drell to spend twelve (12) months in prison for his part in a conspiracy to defraud the State of Louisiana of almost \$189,000 in taxes. Testimony at his guilty plea and today at the sentencing hearing established that OMAR JAMIL SALAM failed to pay taxes on cigars and other tobacco products he ordered and bought from out-of-state vendors, had shipped into Louisiana, and then sold to various convenience stores in central Louisiana without the proper State of Louisiana license and with no payment of Louisiana tobacco taxes. SALAM was also ordered to pay \$189,000 in restitution to the Louisiana Department of Revenue. After SALAM serves his prison sentence, he will be placed on three years supervised release.

OMAR JAMIL SALAM pleaded guilty in March to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and fraud by interstate carrier. Testimony at his guilty plea and today at his sentencing hearing showed that SALAM ordered large quantities of cigars and other tobacco products from two companies outside the State of Louisiana and had these cigars and other tobacco products shipped to a store in Alexandria. SALAM was

found with over 60,820 cigars together with evidence of other shipments of cigars and tobacco products during a store inspection by agents of the Louisiana Alcohol Tobacco Control Board. Investigation by the FBI found that over a period of time SALAM had ordered cigars and tobacco products from two out-of-state tobacco supply companies, received these shipments by common carrier, and then sold these cigars and tobacco products to at least 29 convenience stores throughout central Louisiana. SALAM did this without obtaining the proper Louisiana wholesale tobacco dealer license and without paying the taxes owed on these cigars and tobacco products. At the sentencing hearing a Louisiana Department of Revenue Tax Auditor testified that SALAM's actions resulted in an unpaid tax liability of \$189,000. After hearing this evidence Judge Drell ordered SALAM to pay this amount in restitution to the Louisiana Department of Revenue.

This case was jointly investigated by the Louisiana Department of Revenue, the Louisiana State Police, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert W. Gillespie, Jr.

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