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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Fraudster Sentenced To 11 Years In Federal Prison For  
Stealing The Identities Of Hundreds Of Victims To  
Fraudulently Obtain More Than \$2.2 Million In Tax  
Refunds**

**Executed Two Separate Schemes Between 2012 and 2015**

**Baltimore**, Maryland – U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake sentenced Toyosi Alatishe, a/k/a Felix Victor Johnson, age 49, of Columbia, Maryland, today to 11 years in federal prison, followed by 3 years of supervised release, for a conspiracy to commit credit/debit card fraud, wire fraud, and for aggravated identity theft, in connection with two separate schemes to obtain fraudulent tax refunds. Judge Blake entered an order requiring Alatishe to pay restitution in the amount of \$2,287,959.67. A federal jury convicted Alatishe on all 16 counts on January 24, 2019.

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur; Special Agent in Charge Kelly R. Jackson of the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, Washington, D.C. Field Office; Special Agent in Charge Robert E. Craig, Jr. of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service - Mid-Atlantic Field Office; Postal Inspector in Charge Peter R. Rendina of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service - Washington Division; and Chief Lisa Myers of the Howard County Police Department.

“This criminal stole the personal information of law-abiding citizens, including the disabled residents of the group homes where he worked, to file bogus tax returns claiming fraudulent ‘refunds,’ and stole over \$2.2 million from the IRS,” said U.S. Attorney Robert K. Hur. “Those who prepare and file fraudulent returns cheat all honest taxpayers. We are committed to investigating, stopping, and prosecuting these crimes.”

According to the evidence presented at Alatishe’s six-day trial, in the first scheme, which occurred from 2012 to 2013, Alatishe misused his position as a caretaker for residents of a group home for individuals suffering from severe mental and physical disabilities, by using their

personal information to file fraudulent tax returns with the IRS and the State of Maryland. Alatishe also obtained access to the personal identifying information of other mentally disabled Maryland victims, who lived at group homes run by a company where Alatishe's ex-wife worked. After filing the fraudulent tax returns through an online tax filing company, Alatishe had the tax refunds deposited into bank accounts he controlled, including an account opened using a fraudulent Nigerian passport in the name of Felix Victor Johnson.

The evidence proved that, in 2013, Alatishe also filed fraudulent tax returns using the names and social security numbers of eight other victim taxpayers from across the United States without their authority. The fraudulent tax returns contained false information concerning the taxpayers, including their marital status, spouses, dependents, employers, wages, withholdings, tax due and owing, and refund amounts. This resulted in Alatishe receiving fraudulently obtained tax refunds of more than \$30,000 in March and April 2013, which the IRS direct deposited into the Felix Victor Johnson bank account.

In the second scheme, a conspirator in Florida used the identifying information of a Florida accountant to fraudulently purchase debit cards from First View Financial, purportedly so that customers of the accountant could have their tax refunds transferred directly from the IRS to the cards. The co-conspirator asked First View to mail 2,000 prepaid debit cards to him at an address in Tampa, Florida, which was actually the address of Regus Management Group, LLC, a company that provided virtual office services to businesses. Still posing as the accountant, the co-conspirator contracted with Regus for mail forwarding. Specifically, the evidence proved that all mail received by Regus in the victim accountant's name was forwarded to Alatishe's address in Columbia, Maryland. Trial evidence showed that during January and February 2015, First View sent out the debit cards in five different shipments, which Regus then forwarded to Alatishe's address.

Further, the government presented evidence proving that in 2015, the personal identifying information of more than 300 individuals from across the United States was used without their permission and knowledge to file false tax returns with the IRS in order to obtain refunds. More than 300 of the First View debit cards were activated and loaded with IRS tax refund money from the fraudulently filed tax returns. The total value of the IRS funds loaded onto the cards was more than \$2.2 million. During February and March 2015, Alatishe and his co-conspirator withdrew more than \$1 million through ATM and point-of-sale transactions, including the purchase of \$40,000 in money orders.

Further, between March 6 and March 15, 2015, Alatishe was captured on security video repeatedly using ATMs at a specific financial institution in Columbia, Maryland. As detailed in the trial testimony, withdrawals occurred in short periods of time with many different cards from First View, in approximate withdrawal amounts of \$300. The large number of transactions and high dollar value resulted in the ATMs running out of money. The financial institution conducted an investigation and notified law enforcement and First View, resulting in First View and other financial institutions freezing the remaining funds on the First View debit cards on about March 17, 2015.

According to trial testimony, a federal search warrant was executed at Alatishe's residence in June 2016. Law enforcement recovered electronic evidence, including evidence as to Alatishe's

involvement in both fraudulent tax refund schemes. Agents also seized physical evidence, including numerous handwritten lists containing the personal identifying information of identity theft victims. Some of these handwritten documents were identified by Alatishe as his handwriting and the information on the handwritten sheets matched even more extensive lists of personal identifying information from his computer. In 2013, Alatishe had been the subject of an investigation and search warrant by the Howard County Police Department, which led to the seizure of important evidence used during the federal trial of the two schemes.

United States Attorney Robert K. Hur praised the IRS-CI, DCIS, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and Howard County Police Department for its work in the investigation. Mr. Hur thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Harry M. Gruber and Dana J. Brusca, who prosecuted the case.

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**Topic(s):**

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**Component(s):**

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