



**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Former U.S. Army Employee Pleads Guilty to Kickback Scheme to Steer U.S. Government Contracts**

A former civilian employee of the U.S. Army's Directorate of Public Works pleaded guilty today for his role in a kickbacks scheme to steer government contracts for work at Camp Arifjan, a U.S. Army base in Kuwait.

According to court documents, Ephraim Garcia, 64, admitted that he conspired with Gandhiraj Sankaralingam, aka Gandhi Raj, the former general manager and co-owner of Kuwait-based contracting company Gulf Link Venture Co. W.L.L. (Gulf Link), to steer government contracts to Gulf Link. In his position with the U.S. Army, Garcia was involved in the solicitation, award and management of certain government contracts related to facilities support at Camp Arifjan.

In 2015, at an Olive Garden restaurant located in Mahboula, Kuwait, Garcia and Sankaralingam approached an employee of the prime contractor responsible for base support services. During that meeting, they offered to pay the prime-contractor employee in exchange for his assistance in steering subcontracts worth over \$3 million to Gulf Link. Rather than agree to the scheme, the prime-contractor employee reported the kickback offer to authorities. Garcia was arrested in the Philippines in December 2019. On Aug. 19, 2020, Sankaralingam was charged in a superseding indictment with conspiracy to offer a kickback and with paying illegal gratuities to Garcia. Sankaralingam remains a fugitive.

Garcia pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to offer a kickback and one count of offering a kickback. He is scheduled to be sentenced on Oct. 22, and faces a maximum of five years in prison on the conspiracy charge and 10 years in prison on the kickback charge. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite Jr. of the Justice Department's Criminal Division; Director Marion F. Robey of the Major Procurement Fraud Unit, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command; and Assistant Inspector General for Investigations Paul Sternal of the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), made the announcement.

The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command and DCIS are investigating the case.

Trial Attorneys Christopher Jackson and Matthew Sullivan of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section are prosecuting the case.

*The charges in the indictment against Sankaralingam are merely allegations, and he is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

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