



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Georgia Couple Arraigned on Money Laundering Charges in Social Security Imposter Scam Investigation

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, Gail S. Ennis, is announcing the arraignment of two individuals in a significant Social Security imposter telephone scam case. Chaitali Dave, 36, and Mehulkumar Patel, 36, both of Lexington, South Carolina are facing Federal charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering in the Northern District of Georgia. Patel was arraigned on June 19, and Dave was arraigned today. This husband and wife are alleged to have retrieved over \$400,000 from at least 24 victims of Social Security and tech support scam phone calls.

According to the indictment, Patel and Dave are members of a network based in India that defrauded U.S. residents, including senior citizens, by using technical support and Social Security number scams. The scheme often involved call center employees pretending to be government officials. These scammers deceived victims by telling them their Social Security numbers were involved in criminal activity. They threatened arrest and loss of assets if the victims did not send funds via FedEx and UPS.

Patel and Dave allegedly facilitated the scheme by collecting and transferring funds received from scam victims nationwide to those running the scam operation. Our investigation found evidence they defrauded at least 24 victims from May 2019 to January 2020, causing financial and emotional harm.

“Today’s arraignment is a bold statement that we will aggressively pursue overseas phone scammers—and their facilitators in this country—who are stealing Americans’ hard-earned money,” said Inspector General Ennis. “I want to thank the United States Attorney’s Office in the Northern District of Georgia for bringing these charges, and our law enforcement partners for their efforts in investigating these scams and bringing the perpetrators to justice.”

“I commend the Department of Justice and Social Security’s Office of the Inspector General for their aggressive work to fight fraudsters who target Americans through various phone scams,” said Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security. “People who receive suspicious calls should just hang up, and never give out their personal information. They should go online to oig.ssa.gov to report these Social Security scams.”

The following law enforcement agencies provided valuable assistance in this investigation: United States Secret Service, Lexington County Sheriff’s Department (South Carolina), Aiken Police Department (South Carolina), Naperville Police Department (Illinois), Rocky River Police Department (Ohio), and Henrico County Police (Virginia).

Members of the press may make inquiries to Social Security OIG at oig.dcom@ssa.gov.

Inspector General Ennis urges the public to exercise caution with any caller who claims to be a government employee. Government agencies will never threaten you with immediate arrest or other legal action if you do not send cash, retail gift cards, wire transfers, or internet currency. They will also never demand secrecy from you in resolving a debt or any other problem. If you need to send a payment to Social Security, SSA will send a letter with payment options and appeal rights. If you suspect you have received an SSA-related scam call, report it at <https://oig.ssa.gov>. Learn more at oig.ssa.gov/scam.