



# News Release

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January 16, 2021

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Media Inquiries: (410) 965-2671

## **Former Social Security Employee Pleads Guilty to Theft**

*Cheikh Cisse misused agency systems to divert over \$236,000*

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA), Gail S. Ennis, and United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, Robert K. Hur, announced a former SSA employee pleaded guilty yesterday to theft of government property, and aggravated identity theft. Cheikh Ahmet Tidiane Cisse was indicted of the same charges in April 2019 by a Federal Grand Jury in the District of Maryland.

According to the plea agreement, SSA employed Cisse, 45, as a claims specialist in its Office of International Operations. Between July 2018 and March 2019, Cisse misused his official position and SSA systems access to misdirect benefit funds to accounts he controlled, for his personal use. The scheme originated when Cisse created a Social Security number and identity, then used that information to file a benefit claim on a real individual's Social Security record, and direct the benefits to an account he controlled.

Cisse admitted he then expanded the scheme to include other individuals, both real and fictitious, and other benefit claims on real individuals' records without their authorization or knowledge. The total attempted fraud loss to the government is more than \$236,000.

"SSA possesses sensitive and personal information for almost every person in this country, and SSA employees have a fundamental duty to protect that information," said Inspector General Ennis. "We take any violation of the public trust very seriously, and we will continue to work with SSA to identify and root out suspected employee fraud. I want to thank the U.S. Attorney's Office for its support of this investigation, which resulted in today's plea."

As part of his plea agreement, Cisse will be required to pay restitution of \$83,247 and forfeit \$30,000 seized from his home. He also has to pay a money judgement of \$51,107. He faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in Federal prison for theft of government property; and a mandatory two years in prison, consecutive to any other sentence imposed, for aggravated identity theft. His sentencing is anticipated to take place in April 2021.

The Social Security Office of the Inspector General, Philadelphia Field Division, investigated this case under the supervision of Special Agent-in-Charge Michael McGill. Special Assistant United States Attorney Michael Davio prosecuted the case. The Department of Justice press release is available at [this link](#). Members of the public are encouraged to report suspected Social Security fraud to the OIG at <https://oig.ssa.gov>.

Members of the press may make inquiries to Social Security OIG at [oig.dcom@ssa.gov](mailto:oig.dcom@ssa.gov) or (410) 965-2671.