

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Nigerian National Charged for Role in Unemployment and Money Laundering Schemes

BOSTON – A Nigerian national was charged yesterday in connection with his alleged involvement in multiple criminal schemes, including romance scams targeting the elderly, the submission of fraudulent pandemic-related assistance claims using stolen personally identifiable information and money laundering.

Damilola Adepoju, 29, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was charged in a criminal complaint with wire fraud, conspiracy to commit wire fraud, money laundering and aggravated identity theft. Adepoju made an initial appearance in federal court in Brooklyn and was detained pending a hearing on Thursday, May 27, 2021. Adepoju will make an initial appearance in federal court in Boston at a later date.

According to the charging documents, Adepoju and his co-conspirators submitted fraudulent pandemic-related unemployment claims and applied for disaster-assistance loans to the Small Business Administration using stolen personally identifiable information. In some instances, Adepoju and his co-conspirators allegedly targeted elderly victims through romance scams, taking their personal information and using them to launder the proceeds of the fraudulent schemes. Adepoju also allegedly used a shoe retail business he operated to launder funds, funneling the money to other financial accounts inside and outside the United States. The investigation has identified more than \$600,000 in actual or attempted losses to date.

The charges of wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of money laundering provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of aggravated identity theft provides for a mandatory sentence of two years in prison to be served consecutively to any other sentenced imposed, one year of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; and Nikitas Splagounias, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations made the announcement. The Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance provided valuable assistance with the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Markham of Mendell's Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Topic(s):
Financial Fraud

Component(s):
[USAO - Massachusetts](#)