

PRESS RELEASE

Dominican National Arrested On Charges Of Identity Theft And Federal Benefits Fraud

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York

Veronica Yaraset Molina Assumed Stolen Identity of U.S. Citizen for Nearly Two Decades to Fraudulently Obtain Approximately \$800,000 in Federal Benefits

United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Jay Clayton, Special Agent in Charge of the Boston-New York Field Division of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General ("SSA OIG"), Amy Connelly, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Office of Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), Pete Gizas, and Special Agent in Charge of the Diplomatic Security Service ("DSS") New York Field Office, Brian Wood, announced today the unsealing of a Complaint charging VERONICA YARASET MOLINA with theft of government funds, healthcare fraud, passport fraud, and aggravated identity theft. YARASET MOLINA was arrested this morning and presented earlier today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ona T. Wang.

"For nearly two decades, Veronica Yaraset Molina allegedly stole the identity of an American citizen and used it to loot federal benefit programs of nearly \$800,000 in taxpayer funds," said U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton. "This Office will pursue those who defraud federal benefit programs."

"Veronica Yaraset Molina allegedly used a stolen identity to orchestrate a nearly 20-year fraud scheme to siphon off hundreds of thousands of dollars in benefits meant for vulnerable Americans," said HSI Special Agent in Charge Pete Gizas. "This kind of calculated fraud is not a victimless crime; it drains taxpayer resources, corrupts vital safety net programs, and inflicts lasting damage on innocent victims who are denied the assistance they need when disaster strikes. HSI New York, as a leading member of the Homeland Security Task Force New York, is fully committed to relentlessly pursuing

fraudsters who exploit our systems and our communities, and we will continue to work side-by-side with the U.S. Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners to identify, dismantle, and bring to justice anyone who engages in this kind of predatory conduct."

"The Diplomatic Security Service mandate extends beyond protecting State Department people, property and information—it includes safeguarding the integrity of U.S. travel documents," said DSS New York Field Office Special Agent in Charge Brian Wood. "Molina's alleged use of a fraudulently obtained U.S. passport to repeatedly enter this country is exactly the kind of threat DSS is uniquely positioned to investigate, and we are proud to have worked alongside our law enforcement partners to bring this case to light."

"The defendant, a Dominican national, is accused of using a stolen identity to fraudulently obtain approximately \$120,000 in Social Security disability benefits, unlawfully enriching herself at the expense of American taxpayers," said SSA OIG Special Agent in Charge Amy Connelly. "We remain steadfast in our mission to safeguard the integrity of Social Security programs and will continue to aggressively pursue those who exploit vulnerable systems through fraud, identity theft, and other criminal conduct."

As alleged in the Complaint:

YARASET MOLINA, a Dominican national who has been unlawfully present in the United States since at least approximately 2000, and who assumed the stolen identity of a United States citizen ("Victim-1"), engaged in a nearly 20-year scheme to fraudulently obtain approximately \$800,000 in federal benefits, including Social Security disability benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits, Medicare benefits, and unemployment benefits, to which she was not entitled.

As alleged, YARASET MOLINA repeatedly used Victim-1's identity to apply for and receive the foregoing benefits across multiple federal programs. YARASET MOLINA also used Victim-1's identity to apply for and receive a United States passport, which she used to return to the United States from the Dominican Republic on several occasions. Due at least in part to YARASET MOLINA's identity theft scheme, Victim-1 was unable to receive Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") benefits in the wake of Hurricane Maria in or about 2017.

* * *

YARASET MOLINA, 51, of the Dominican Republic, is charged with four counts of theft of government funds, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 641, each of which carries a maximum

sentence of 10 years in prison; healthcare fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1347, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison; passport fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1543, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison; and aggravated identity theft, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1028A, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison, to run consecutively to any other term of imprisonment imposed.

The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

Mr. Clayton praised the SSA-OIG, HSI, DSS, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General for their assistance in this case.

The case is being handled by the Office's General Crimes Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicholas D. Pavlis is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

On April 7, the Department of Justice announced the creation of the National Fraud Enforcement Division ("Fraud Division"). The Fraud Division is laser-focused on investigating and prosecuting those who commit fraud against the American people. The Department's work to combat fraud supports President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

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As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Complaint and the description of the Complaint set forth herein constitutes only allegations, and every fact described therein should be treated as an allegation.

Contact

Nicholas Biase, Shelby Wratchford
(212) 637-2600

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Attachment

[u.s. v. molina complaint.pdf](#) [PDF, 556 KB]

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