



# UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Sentencing in Bank Fraud and Identity Theft Scheme That Netted Over \$600,000**

(Richmond, VA) – Gagik Urutyman, age 21, of Lakewood, New Jersey, was sentenced today by Chief United States District Judge James R. Spencer to 95 months of imprisonment for his role in a bank fraud and identity theft scheme. In October 2007, Urutyman was convicted after a week-long trial by a federal jury of Conspiracy to Commit Bank Fraud, two counts of Bank Fraud, and two counts of Aggravated Identity Theft. His sentence today includes a consecutive term of twenty-four months mandated by his conviction for Aggravated Identity Theft. Urutyman was also sentenced to five years of supervised release and ordered to pay a total of \$636,349.33 in restitution. Urutyman is a native of Armenia and was in the United States illegally at the time of the offense. As part of his sentence, he was ordered deported upon completion of his prison term. The sentence was announced by Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Two of Urutyman's codefendants were sentenced earlier this month. Anton Mesropyan, age 25, of Lakewood, New Jersey and originally from Armenia, was sentenced on January 14, 2008 to a total of 57 months. Mesropyan previously plead guilty to Conspiracy to Commit Bank Fraud and Aggravated Identity Theft. Elvina Gutierrez, age 25, of Asbury Park, New Jersey and originally from Russia, was sentenced on January 9, 2008 to 26 months for committing perjury before a Richmond federal grand jury in the course of the investigation.

Evidence presented at the trial established that the scheme began in August 2006 when Gagik Urutyman obtained employment at the Miller's Neighborhood Market gas station in Mechanicsville, Virginia. Urutyman worked at the station until mid-December 2006 and used this employment for the purpose of obtaining access to customers' bank account and personal identification numbers associated with their debit cards. The stolen information was later used to make fraudulent withdrawals from automated teller machines (ATM) in the Richmond area, Northern Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The majority of the withdrawals were made in December 2006 and totaled approximately \$636,349.33. Some of the illegal proceeds were wired to individuals in Armenia and Russia.

In addition to codefendants Mesropyan and Gutierrez, three others were named in the Second Superseding Indictment. Gevorg Ghazaryan, age 25, of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, was acquitted at the trial in October 2007 by Chief Judge Spencer before the case reached the jury. Gevorg Gasparyan, age 25, of Glendale, California, was the victim of an alleged homicide in September 2007. Sargis Poghosyan, age 24, of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, remains a fugitive in the case and is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

“Our task force has done a tremendous job rooting out identity theft rings and helping victims restore their good names and good credit,” said Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

“This is a textbook example of inter-agency cooperation, which was absolutely necessary in such a complex case as this. Everyone involved worked tirelessly on behalf of the many victims. Although it caused a tremendous amount of disruption to their lives, they can now put this behind them knowing that this organization has been dismantled,” said Colonel V. Stuart Cook, Sheriff of Hanover County.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State as members of the Metro-Richmond Identity Theft Task Force. The investigation was initiated by the Hanover County Sheriff’s Office which has continued to assist in the investigation along with the Task Force. Other member agencies of the Task Force include: the Postal Inspection Service; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Richmond Police Department; the Chesterfield Police Department; and Henrico County Division of Police. Prosecutions for the Task Force are handled by the United States Attorney’s Office and the Office of the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Laura Colombell Marshall and Elizabeth C. Wu. For more information on the Task Force, including assistance for victims of identity theft, visit: [www.richmondIDtheft.com](http://www.richmondIDtheft.com).

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