

Ghanaian National Charged with Identity Theft in Massachusetts

A Ghanaian national was indicted by a federal grand jury with illegal possession of identification documents and aggravated identity theft.

Stephen Okyere Budu, a/k/a Yaw Okyere, 38, a citizen of Ghana residing in Worcester, was charged in an indictment with possession of five or more false identification documents and aggravated identity theft. Budu was arrested and charged by criminal complaint in March 2018.

According to court documents, on March 7, 2018, federal agents executed a search warrant at Budu's apartment in Worcester, where they seized computers and a printer. An initial forensic review of one of the computers revealed files containing more than 180 Massachusetts driver's licenses with various names and photographs.

During the execution of the search warrant, agents interviewed Budu, who stated that he was a citizen of Ghana, had arrived in the United States a few years earlier on a visa, that he had overstayed his visa, and was unsure of his immigration status.

The charge of illegally possessing five or more identification documents provides for a sentence of no greater than 15 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of aggravated identity theft carries a mandatory sentence of two years in prison, which must be served consecutive to any other sentence imposed by the court. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Delany De Leon-Colon, Acting Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; and Worcester Police Chief Steven M. Sargent made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth G. Shine of Lelling's Major Crimes 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.