

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Diase-Coffelt Announces First Arrests As Attorney General

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Acting Attorney General Soraya Diase-Coffelt Wednesday announced the first two V.I. Department of Justice arrests under her leadership for crimes stemming from the processing of unauthorized tax refund checks and Automated Clearing House (ACH) transfers from the Government of the Virgin Islands' First Bank general fund account.

The V.I. Department of Justice's Special Investigations Unit arrested Tameika S.Ward based on an arrest warrant issued by the Superior Court Magistrate Division. In addition, law enforcement authorities in Florida apprehended Antoinette M. Warner on a second Superior Court warrant, and are holding her pending extradition to the Virgin Islands.

According to the Dept. of Justice, more than \$66,000 in total funds were fraudulently withdrawn from the compromised government bank account.

The two women were arrested on charges stemming from a nine-month criminal fraud investigation by the V. I. Department of Justice's White Collar Crime and Special Investigations Division, resulting from a criminal complaint from the V.I. Bureau of Internal Revenue and Department of Finance Treasury Division. It was discovered that several unauthorized tax refund checks were negotiated on the V. I. Government's First Bank account as well as numerous unauthorized ACH transfers to personal accounts at stateside financial institutions between Sept. 2013 through Sept. 2014.

Ward is scheduled to be arraigned in Superior Court on Jan. 22, at which time formal charges will be filed against her. Warner's first court appearance is reportedly scheduled for Jan. 16 in Orange County, Fla. for extradition proceedings.

The investigation continues with additional arrests expected, according to the Dept. of Justice.