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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 24, 2022

## **El Paso Man Pleads Guilty to Over \$600K Tax Fraud Scheme**

EL PASO – An El Paso man pleaded guilty yesterday to multiple counts of an indictment for his involvement in a tax fraud scheme.

According to court documents, Elein Rodela Jr., 41, was a tax preparer in the El Paso area. From August 2016 to August 2018, Rodela perpetrated a scheme to defraud the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by filing false tax returns and then receiving the ill-gotten refunds. The scheme involved using legitimate W2 forms to file fraudulent tax returns and obtain federal tax refund checks in the name of non-citizens working in the U.S. To further his scheme, Rodela opened P.O. boxes in El Paso, Texas and New Mexico, and used these addresses to receive the fraudulently obtained tax refund checks. He subsequently cashed the refund checks and laundered the money through a bank account belonging to a children's sports team. Rodela's scheme resulted in a total loss to the IRS of approximately \$670,217.

Rodela pleaded guilty to three counts of mail fraud; one count of wire fraud; four counts of aggravated identity theft; five counts of money laundering; and one count of theft of government funds. A sentencing date has not been set. Rodela faces up to 20 years in prison on each of the mail fraud, wire fraud, identity theft, and money laundering counts. He faces up to 10 years in prison on the theft of government funds count. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence and restitution after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

U.S. Attorney Ashley C. Hoff of the Western District of Texas and IRS Special Agent in Charge Ramsey E. Covington, Houston Field Office, made the announcement.

The IRS is investigating the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ellen Denum and Shane Wagman Romero are prosecuting the case.

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**Topic(s):**

Tax

**Component(s):**

USAO - Texas, Western

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