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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

November 30, 2010

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16 INDICTED IN RACKETEERING CASE

A Denver Grand Jury has returned a 41-count indictment charging 16 people as part of a criminal enterprise accused of working together to steal money from several financial institutions over the last 15 months. The indictment, returned on November 10th, is the result of a Denver Police Department investigation and was unsealed yesterday.

Azimdzhon Mazhidov (dob: 07-22-88), **Firuzi Sharifi** (dob: 04-18-91), **Bobokalon Sharipov** (dob: 11-25-90) and **Firdavsi Urunov** (dob: 01-23-87) are accused of being the primary members of the criminal enterprise and are charged with violating the Colorado Organized Crime Control Act (COCCA) (F2). They also face numerous other charges including theft, conspiracy to commit theft and criminal impersonation. Twelve other co-defendants are charged with similar counts.

The charges allege that the group opened and used numerous bank accounts with the intention of withdrawing cash from the accounts before the financial institutions were aware there were insufficient funds or closed accounts. Victims include Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase Bank, US Bank and Key Bank with losses of more than \$300,000.

The defendants are from Tajikistan and Russia and have been arrested in Denver and Philadelphia. In addition to facing criminal charges, they will face eventual deportation.

The Denver Police Department also worked with the Colorado Attorney General's Office, the FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).