



Department of Justice

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MONEY LAUNDERING FORFEITURE COMPLAINT FILED AGAINST \$110 MILLION IN PROCEEDS FROM ITALIAN PUBLIC CORRUPTION OFFENSES

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department has filed a civil complaint in federal court in Miami seeking the forfeiture of approximately \$110 million in proceeds from Italian public corruption offenses that were allegedly laundered in the United States.

The civil forfeiture complaint, filed July 12, 2007, in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, seeks proceeds from 19 brokerage and bank accounts. The complaint arises from an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Office of Investigations in Miami into a series of U.S. money laundering violations allegedly committed between 1998 and 2007 with the proceeds of Italian public corruption offenses. Italian authorities had requested U.S. government assistance with their own money laundering investigation related to Angelo “Nino” Rovelli’s payment of bribes to Italian federal judges to influence civil litigation Rovelli initiated against Banca Istituto Mobiliare Italiano (IMI). Rovelli sued IMI over IMI’s refusal to honor an agreement to assist in the financial bailout of a Rovelli-owned chemical company, SIR-Rumianca (SIR). Due to the bribes orchestrated by Rovelli, SIR ultimately prevailed in civil litigation. Nino Rovelli died before the verdicts were rendered and his heirs netted almost \$400 million of tainted funds in 1994.

The 23-page complaint alleges that, from 1998 through 2007, Rovelli family financial advisor Pierfrancesco Munari and unidentified others engaged in a conspiracy to launder hundreds of millions of dollars in SIR-IMI bribery scheme proceeds. After the judicial bribery scandal broke in 1996, Munari helped the Rovelli family set up structures to conceal large portions of the \$400 million in public corruption proceeds that IMI paid to the Rovelli heirs. A significant portion of the laundered Italian public corruption proceeds were allegedly sent to, or through, bank and investment accounts located in the United States – making the funds and assets on deposit in the accounts subject to forfeiture as the proceeds of a crime or as property facilitating such unlawful conduct.

Upon forfeiture of the funds under U.S. law, the United States will seek to return the funds to any victim that files a petition for remission and meets the legal definition of a victim under the applicable laws and regulations.

The SIR-IMI bribery scheme resulted in several criminal convictions in the Italian courts for public corruption offenses. Munari and Nino Rovelli’s youngest son Oscar were arrested by Italian authorities in January 2007 on money laundering charges. Italian authorities subsequently charged two other Rovelli heirs for laundering the proceeds of the underlying Italian public corruption offenses.

In April 2007, the Justice Department's Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section, in coordination with the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Southern District of Florida, the Southern District of California, the District of New Jersey, and the Southern District of New York, obtained four ex-parte temporary restraining orders for numerous investment and bank accounts that were believed to contain the proceeds of the Italian public corruption scheme. Ultimately, the United States restrained criminal proceeds valued at more than \$110 million.

This case is being prosecuted by senior trial attorney Jack de Kluiver of the Criminal Division's Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Alvarez, deputy chief of the Asset Forfeiture Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs and the Justice Department's Attaché in Rome provided crucial support for the investigation. Assistance was provided by the forfeiture units of the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Southern District of California, the District of New Jersey, and the Southern District of New York. The SAIC-Miami ICE investigation is headed by Supervisory Special Agent Deborah Morrissey, and received substantial assistance from the ICE Attaché in Rome.

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