TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL U.S.
fighting corruption, promoting democracy

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First-Ever Prosecution Under Landmark Anti-Bribery Law Marks Historic Step in Fight Against Corruption

The Foreign Extortion Prevention Act, which Transparency International U.S. helped develop and secure passage of, allows U.S. prosecutors to hold corrupt foreign officials accountable for demanding bribes.

A statement from Transparency International U.S.
November 17, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Justice announced the first-ever prosecution under the Foreign Extortion Prevention Act (FEPA), a landmark bipartisan anti-corruption law enacted in 2023. Transparency International U.S. (TI US) helped develop the legislation and led the civil society campaign to secure its passage, working with a broad, cross-partisan coalition.

Federal prosecutors charged Ada Evila Serrano Nuñez, the former Honduran Consul General in Atlanta, with violating FEPA, conspiring to violate FEPA, and conspiring to commit money laundering. According to the Department of Justice, Serrano allegedly demanded and received more than $375,000 in bribes in exchange for appointments for passports and other consular services. Three others were arrested in connection with the alleged scheme.

For nearly half a century, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) has prohibited U.S. companies and individuals from bribing foreign officials, but U.S. law lacked a corresponding prohibition targeting officials who demanded or accepted those bribes. FEPA closed that gap, empowering U.S. prosecutors to pursue foreign officials who solicit or accept bribes from Americans, U.S. companies, or companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges, as well as certain foreign officials or their agents present in the United States.

Scott Greytak, Deputy Executive Director of Transparency International U.S., issued the following statement:

> For nearly half a century, the United States prosecuted those who paid bribes to foreign officials, but lacked a law directly targeting the officials who demanded them. We helped develop and secure passage of the Foreign Extortion Prevention Act to close that loophole.

Today, that law is being put to work for the first time, sending a message to corrupt officials around the world: If you demand a bribe, you may now find yourself facing justice in an American courtroom.

This is an important first step toward realizing the promise of one of the most consequential foreign bribery laws in nearly half a century. Corruption is not a victimless crime. It exploits ordinary people, punishes honest businesses, and allows powerful officials to profit from positions of public trust.

We commend the Justice Department and the FBI for bringing this historic first prosecution. We urge the Department to vigorously and independently enforce FEPA, including in cases involving powerful foreign officials, and to ensure that this first case marks the beginning of sustained enforcement of this landmark law.

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Transparency International U.S. is part of the world's largest coalition against corruption. In collaboration with national chapters in more than 100 countries, we are leading the fight to turn our vision of a world free from corruption into reality.

Related Resources

- Read the Department of Justice's announcement of the first FEPA prosecution.
- Read TI US's primer on FEPA;
- Read TI US's FAQ document about FEPA;
- Read TI US's report on FEPA's jurisdictional reach and practical enforceability around the world.

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