

Apr 2, 2024

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



## Attorney General Ashley Moody News Release

### Attorney General Moody Announces Arrest of Five Members of Organized Retail Theft Ring



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is announcing the arrests of five members of an organized retail theft ring. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement arrested Maike Acosta De Armas, 47, Lazaro Santiago Acosta De Armas, 45, Yusser Echemendia Rodriguez, 42, Elias Ramos Hernandez, 48, and Honasi Diaz Santos, 47, all of Miami-Dade County. Each person in the theft ring faces multiple felony charges including organized scheme to defraud of \$50,000 or more and retail theft of multiple items within thirty days at different physical locations.

**Attorney General Ashley Moody** said, “This criminal group committed more than 53 thefts in 13 Florida counties, stealing thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise in a fraudulent systematic scheme. In Florida, we go after organized retail thieves, and now this nefarious group, thanks to the work of our law enforcement partners, will be held accountable for their crimes.”

The investigation began in July 2022 when FDLE Miami agents reviewed a criminal complaint provided by the company’s organized retail crime investigator. The complaint alleged that the fraudster’s operation spanned multiple Florida counties, resulting in thousands of dollars in losses.

Working with local law enforcement partners, FDLE identified 53 theft incidents in 13 Florida counties, including Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Indian River, Lee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, Sarasota, St. Lucie, and Volusia.

The investigation revealed that the organized theft ring engaged in a systematic scheme to defraud totaling more than \$55,000 in losses to the company. The scheme involved abusing the online purse system and stealing items that the suspects claimed to have already purchased online. The suspects also “returned” stolen merchandise to stores in different locations using receipts from online.

The FDLE Miami Organized Crime Squad led the investigation, assisted by the Miami-Dade Police Department’s (MDPD) Retail Crimes Squad.

Lazaro Santiago Acosta De Armas was arrested by Miami-Dade Police earlier this year on unrelated charges and is booked in the Metro West Detention Center without bond.

The Broward Sheriff’s Office arrested Echemendia Rodriguez on March 25, and booked into the Broward County Jail without bond.

Maike Acosta De Armas and Ramos Hernandez were arrested on March 27 and booked into the Turner Guilford Knight Detention Center without bond.

Diaz Santos is in the custody of the Florida Department of Corrections.

The case will be prosecuted by the Office of the Attorney General’s Office of Statewide Prosecution.

# # #