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PRESS RELEASE

Afghan Sentenced to Prison for Committing Fraud Against USAID

Washington, DC – Ahman Samim Sediqi of Kabul, Afghanistan, was tried and sentenced in a local Afghan court on forgery and embezzlement charges stemming from his work on a development project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), announced USAID Office of Inspector General spokeswoman Dona M. Dinkler.

A three-judge panel found Sediqi guilty of embezzling nearly \$193,000 while working as a finance coordinator on a \$229 million local governance program financed by USAID and implemented by an American contractor. The program is intended to assist provincial governments and improve stability within the provinces by supporting public administration and governance and promoting community development. On August 2, 2010, the court sentenced Sediqi to 7½ years in prison as prescribed by the Afghan Penal Code—2 years for the falsification of income and rental tax deposit receipts, for which payment was never made, and 5½ years for embezzlement of funds. The defendant is also required to pay \$160,000 in fines.

Sediqi was responsible for depositing the American contractor's monthly tax payments to Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance into a local bank account. When the Ministry reported that it had not received the payments, an investigation was initiated. Local law enforcement officials, aided by investigators from USAID's Office of Inspector General (OIG), discovered that the bank deposit slips Sediqi had submitted to the contractor to prove he had made the payments were not legitimate. Sediqi was arrested on May 11, 2010.

USAID OIG investigators in Afghanistan work closely with local law enforcement authorities in an effort to hold accountable Afghan citizens who engage in criminal misconduct while working on USAID projects.

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