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PRESS RELEASE

Afghan arrested in scheme to defraud USAID

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WASHINGTON, DC - Last week in Kabul Ahman Samim Sediqi, an Afghan citizen working on a community development project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), was arrested by Afghan law enforcement authorities, announced USAID Acting Assistant Inspector for Investigations Dona M. Dinkler. USAID's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in Kabul assisted with the investigation that led to the arrest.

Sediqi is accused 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 helps Afghan communities work with their local governments on development projects. 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.

Sediqi was responsible for depositing the 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 OIG, discovered that the bank deposit slips Sediqi had submitted to the contractor as proof of payment were not legitimate.

Afghan officials say Mr. Sediqi has been charged with violating Article 309 of the Afghan Penal Code, "Forgery of Writings, Documents, Signatures, and Seals." Further investigation is required under Afghan law. Meanwhile, the subject remains in jail in Kabul awaiting trial.

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