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## Calif man pleads guilty in Armenian document scam

The Associated Press

Posted: 09/21/2010 12:42:59 PM PDT

Updated: 09/21/2010 12:42:59 PM PDT

SANTA ANA, Calif.—A former Armenian consular employee in California has pleaded guilty to helping an immigrant avoid deportation by bribing foreign officials for a letter denying him travel documents.

Hakop Hovanesyan entered the plea Monday in Santa Ana federal court to a charge of obstructing government proceedings.

In 2008, Hovanesyan charged an immigrant \$37,000 for a letter from Armenian officials denying him a travel document, which essentially prevented the U.S. government from deporting him.

Authorities arrested five people last year, including a former Armenian consul to Los Angeles, after a federal probe into more than two dozen such letters.

Hovanesyan's attorney Mark Werksman says his client was trying to help someone but did it the wrong way.

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