



PRESS RELEASE

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BOGUS PHONE SALES – “BUY 3 GET 1 FREE”

The Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) would like to warn and advise members of the public to exercise extreme caution when responding to advertisements through the print media, unsolicited emails and communication through social media on cheap mobile phone deals that make promises such as “buy 3 get 1 free”.

The Director of FIU, Mr Razim Buksh said that the FIU has established that the “buy 3 get 1 free” advertisement in the local print media on 27 May 2016 and 1 June 2016 is bogus and a scam.

The advertisement claims to offer a “buy 3 get 1 free” deal on brand new Apple iPhones, Samsung Galaxy Series phones and digital video cameras with prices ranging from AUD\$220 to AUD\$2,000. Interested customers were to contact the following emails: orderproduct@salesperson.net and orderproductbrandnew@gmail.com or Skype: [orderproduct](#).

Mr Buksh said that this was a well-planned scam by international criminal gangs that used a fake email address purporting to be from two legitimate businesses in Australia and three sets of stolen personal credit card details to pay for the advertisement. The FIU was able to verify with the owners of the Australian businesses that they had nothing to do with the bogus phone sales scam. The criminals had also used stolen ID cards and were purporting to be “sales staff” of a legitimate telecommunications related company based in the United Kingdom. The beneficiaries were located in Italy and the United Kingdom there could be other criminal syndicates located elsewhere.

Mr Buksh said that the FIU was able to establish that when contacted by prospective buyers from Fiji, the criminals would respond immediately by providing an order form which the prospective buyer will fill with details of their intended purchase. Upon replying to their initial email, the criminals would provide the total price for the order in FJD and the method of preferred payment which was through money transfer service and not through a commercial bank.

Mr Buksh reported that on 1 June 2016, the FIU had issued an Alert Notice to all commercial banks and international money transfer service to refrain from processing any payment to the beneficiaries of the scam.

Mr Buksh urged members of the public to remain vigilant and be wary of such bogus deals and take precautionary measures to verify such offers.

Members of the public are requested to take the following steps when responding to such offers through emails, social media or print media:

1. Be sceptical about “too good to be true” deals;
2. Verify that the advertisement is from a legitimate mobile phone company, supplier or source;
3. Do online searches to verify the details of the deal;
4. Ask for basic information about the supplier such as the physical address or business location, phone number, invoice, TIN number, etc;
5. Consider how you will make the payment. Always insist on sending the money into a bank account. Also ensure that you send money in the name of the company and not the individual purporting to represent the company; and
6. If you are unsure, talk to someone who can assist you to make the right decision.

Members of the public may also report any fraudulent or suspicious transactions to the FIU on telephone number 322 3333 or email: info@fjifiu.gov.fj

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