



# Public Service Announcement

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



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## **SCAMMERS MAY USE PARIS TERRORIST ATTACK TO SOLICIT FRAUDULENT DONATIONS**

In the wake of the terrorist attack against Charlie Hebdo in Paris last month, the FBI would like to warn the public about the potential for fraudulent solicitations of donations for victims. These solicitations come in many forms, such as crowdfunding platforms, e-mail campaigns, or cold calls, and perpetrators may divert some or all of the funds for their own use.

A number of charities and crowdfunding campaigns have already begun soliciting donations. At the time of this advisory, the FBI has not recorded any reports of fraudulent donation schemes relating to the Charlie Hebdo attack. But based on previous trends, the Bureau can reasonably assume that such schemes may target individuals in the United States.

In general, individuals and businesses should be wary of suspicious e-mails, telephone calls, or websites that solicit donations in response to any event. Crowdfunding—soliciting money from a large number of people primarily over the Internet—offers scammers a new venue to easily solicit funds with minimal oversight. Red flags to look out for include:

- The charity refuses to provide detailed information about its organization or how the donation will be used.
- The charity uses a name closely resembling that of a reputable organization.
- The charity pressures individuals to donate immediately.
- The charity asks for donations to be sent through wire transfers, cash or virtual currency.
- The charity guarantees a monetary return for a donation.

The presence of one or more of these behaviors does not conclusively mean a charity is fraudulent; however, individuals and businesses should always verify a charity's legitimacy before making any donations. Suspicious solicitations should be reported to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at [www.IC3.gov](http://www.IC3.gov).