



Department of Justice

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ROY BELFAST JR. AKA CHUCKIE TAYLOR INDICTED ON TORTURE CHARGES

Justice Department Brings First-Ever Torture Charges

WASHINGTON – A federal Grand Jury in Miami charged Roy Belfast Jr. with various crimes related to the alleged 2002 torture of a person in Liberia, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney R. Alexander Acosta of the Southern District of Florida, Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Assistant Director Joseph Billy Jr. for the Counterterrorism Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced today.

Roy M. Belfast Jr., 29, aka Chuckie Taylor, aka Charles Taylor, Jr., aka Charles Taylor II, aka Charles McArther Emmanuel, was charged in an indictment returned today by a federal grand jury in Miami with one count of torture, one count of conspiracy to torture, and one count of using a firearm during the commission of a violent crime. The indictment charges Taylor, son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, with participating in the torture of an individual on or about July 24, 2002, in and around Monrovia, Liberia. The defendant, who was born in the United States, is alleged to have been serving in his father's government in Liberia at the time of the incident.

According to the indictment, on or about July 24, 2002, the victim was abducted from his home and transported to various locations, finally arriving at the residence of then-Liberian President Taylor. The defendant observed questioning of the victim at this location. The victim was then transported for continued interrogation to the residence of a co-conspirator, who was a member of the Liberian Special Security Service.

According to the indictment, while at this residence, the defendant and others tortured the victim. The torture included repeatedly burning the victim's flesh with a hot iron, burning various parts of his body with scalding water, including forcing the victim to hold scalding water in his hands at gunpoint, repeatedly electrically shocking the victim's genitalia and other body parts, and rubbing salt into the victim's wounds.

“This marks the first time the Justice Department has charged a defendant with the crime of torture,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. “Crimes such as these will not go unanswered.”

“The allegations in this case include acts of torture, such as burning flesh with a hot iron, burning flesh with scalding water, and applying electric shocks,” U.S. Attorney Acosta stated. “Such conduct is criminal and constitutes torture and must be prosecuted.”

“Today’s indictment against Charles "Chuckie" Taylor marks a key milestone in ICE’s longstanding efforts to bring human rights violators to justice,” said Assistant Secretary Myers. “This is a clear message that the United States will not be a safe haven for human rights violators.”

“This case is a demonstration of our tireless efforts to ensure that justice is served,” said Assistant Director Joseph Billy, Jr. of the FBI.

This defendant is currently in federal custody in connection with a criminal charge of passport fraud, to which he pleaded guilty on Sept. 15, 2006. His sentencing is scheduled for Dec. 7, 2006. This defendant is being prosecuted under a statute that criminalizes torture and provides U.S. courts jurisdiction to hear cases involving acts of torture committed outside the United States if the offender is a U.S. national or is present in the United States, regardless of nationality.

The statutory maximum penalty for conviction on all offenses is life imprisonment.

An indictment is merely an accusation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty at trial beyond a reasonable doubt.

The joint investigation is being conducted by ICE and the FBI. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney John Cox of the Criminal Division, Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Rochlin of the Southern District of Florida, and Trial Attorney Brenda Sue Thornton of the National Security Division.

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