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## **ROY BELFAST JR., A/K/A CHUCKIE TAYLOR, SENTENCED ON TORTURE CHARGES**

WASHINGTON – Roy M. Belfast Jr. was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Cecilia M. Altonaga today to 97 years in prison for crimes related to the torture of people in Liberia between April 1999 and July 2003, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney R. Alexander Acosta for the Southern District of Florida.

Belfast, a/k/a Chuckie Taylor, Charles Taylor Jr., Charles Taylor II and Charles McArther Emmanuel, was convicted on October 30, 2008, by a federal jury after a six-week trial of five counts of torture, one count of conspiracy to torture, one count of using a firearm during the commission of a violent crime and one count of conspiracy to use a firearm during the commission of a violent crime.

“The lengthy prison term handed down today justly reflects the horror and torture that Taylor Jr. visited upon his victims. This case was made in no small part by the courage of individual victims who had the mettle to come forward and speak the truth about what had been done to them,” Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division said. “Our message to human rights violators, no matter where they are, remains the same: We will use the full reach of U.S. law, and every lawful resource at the disposal of our investigators and prosecutors, to hold you fully accountable for your crimes.”

According to trial testimony, Belfast, who was born in the United States and is the son of the former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor, commanded a paramilitary organization known as the Anti-Terrorist Unit, which was directed to provide protection for the Liberian president and additional dignitaries of the Liberian government. Between 1999 and 2003, in his role as commander of that unit, Belfast and his associates committed numerous and varied forms of torture, including burning victims with molten plastic, lit cigarettes, scalding water, candle wax and an iron; severely beating victims with firearms; cutting and stabbing victims; and shocking victims with an electric device.

“There is justice today for the many victims of Chuckie Taylor”, said John P. Torres, Department of Homeland Security Acting Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. “This sentence ensures that he pays for his barbaric acts. I want to thank the more

than one hundred ICE agents, attorneys, victim advocates and other federal partners whose meticulous investigative work and coordination led to this landmark conviction.”

“This sentence sends a resounding message that torture will not be tolerated here at home or by U.S. nationals abroad,” said Executive Assistant Director Arthur M. Cummings, II, of the FBI National Security Division. “The FBI and our law enforcement partners will continue to investigate such acts wherever they occur.”

On March 30, 2006, Belfast attempted to enter the United States with a passport obtained through false statements submitted on his passport application, and was arrested. Belfast pleaded guilty on Sept. 15, 2006, to passport fraud and was sentenced on Dec. 7, 2007, to 11 months in prison on that charge.

Belfast’s prosecution on the torture charges was the first ever 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 case was jointly investigated by ICE and the FBI. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Karen Rochlin and Caroline Heck Miller of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida and Trial Attorney Chris Graveline of the Criminal Division’s Domestic Security Section. National Security Division Trial Attorney Brenda Sue Thornton and Criminal Division Attorneys John Cox, John-Alex Romano, Michael Surgalla, and Pragna Soni also provided assistance.

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