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WOMAN SENTENCED TO 17 ½ YEARS FOR INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE

GREENBELT, MARYLAND – Allen F. Loucks, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, and R. Alexander Acosta, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice, announced today that Theresa Mubang was sentenced to 210 months and 120 months, to run concurrently, for offenses arising from the exploitation of Evelyn Chumbow, a native of Cameroon. Mubang was also ordered to provide restitution of \$100,000 to Evelyn Chumbow. Mubang fled the Washington, DC area shortly after her conviction by a jury on November 17, 2004. Mubang is a fugitive from justice and there is a warrant for her arrest.

On November 17, 2004, a jury convicted Mubang of involuntary servitude and harboring an alien for financial gain. In November 1996, Theresa Mubang, a former national of Cameroon and now a naturalized United States citizen, brought Chumbow into the United States through London using a false passport. Chumbow was an illegal alien during the period she resided in Mubang's home.

Mubang persuaded Chumbow's family in Cameroon to permit Chumbow to live with her by telling them that Chumbow would be educated in American schools and given opportunities for a

better life. Once in the United States, Mubang isolated Chumbow from family and friends and required her to cook, clean and act as a nanny for Mubang's young son. Months later, in March 1997, Mubang gave birth to another son and Mubang required Chumbow to care for this infant around-the-clock. Chumbow slept on the floor in the children's room and cared for both children night and day. For a period of months, Chumbow also cared for a neighbor's young child before and after school.

During the period Chumbow lived with Mubang, Mubang isolated Chumbow from the outside world. Contrary to Mubang's promises, Chumbow never went to school. Chumbow was not permitted contact with her family back in Cameroon or with family members here in Maryland. Mubang did not allow Chumbow to make friends with other children her age. She forbade Chumbow from answering the door or leaving the home except to complete specific household related tasks.

When Mubang was dissatisfied with Chumbow's work, Mubang verbally and otherwise physically abused Chumbow, including beating Chumbow with fists, a broom handle, a cable, and a high heel shoe. When Mubang beat Chumbow on the top of her head with a high heel shoe, Chumbow scalp's would ooze body fluid. Mubang also beat Chumbow all over her body with a broom handle and cable. Some of these beatings were so severe that they would open wounds on Chumbow's body which bled. Through verbal abuse, isolation of Chumbow from her family in Cameroon and the community here in Maryland, and other forms of physical and mental abuse, Mubang instilled fear in Chumbow to ensure compliance with Mubang's work demands and to prevent Chumbow from leaving.

Around December 5, 1998, Mubang left the house for a weekend conference. In her absence, Chumbow ran away from Mubang's home.

Investigation by federal law enforcement revealed that Chumbow was not the only victim of the defendant's scheme to receive free labor. On January 11, 1995, prior to Chumbow's arrival in the United States, the defendant had brought Cecilia Nkolo, a ten-year-old Cameroonian national, into the United States using a passport issued to another person. Nkolo was forced to cook, clean, and care for Mubang's young son without compensation. As she would later do with Chumbow, Mubang beat Nkolo with fists, a broom handle, a cable, and a high-heeled shoe to ensure the young girl's compliance. After Nkolo called the police several times and Maryland Child Welfare Services intervened, Mubang sent Nkolo home. Nkolo returned to Cameroon alone, one year and ten months after her arrival in the United States. Mubang replaced Nkolo with Chumbow approximately one month later.

"This conviction and sentencing reflects our commitment to fighting human trafficking," said United States Attorney Allen F. Loucks. "We will aggressively enforce federal laws that punish persons who obtain the labor of others through either psychological or physical abuse."

Cynthia O'Connell, the Special Agent in Charge for Baltimore's Office of Investigations stated that "this sentence sends a strong message that involuntary servitude will not be tolerated. ICE will continue to aggressively investigate allegations of abuse and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law."

This case is the result of an investigation by the Bureau of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daphene R. McFerren, and Trial Attorney Amy Pope, from the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.