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

### ***Conviction Is First Under Torture Statute***

WASHINGTON – A federal jury in Miami today convicted Roy M. Belfast Jr. of crimes related to the torture of people in Liberia between April 1999 and July 2003, the Department of Justice and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced.

Belfast, 31, a/k/a Chuckie Taylor, Charles Taylor Jr., Charles Taylor II and Charles McArther Emmanuel, was convicted 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. Belfast, the son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, was charged in a November 2007 superseding indictment with torture, conspiracy to commit torture, using a firearm during a crime of violence and conspiracy to use a firearm during a crime of violence.

Belfast, who was born in the United States, was alleged to have been a commander of an armed security force in Liberia during his father's administration. According to trial testimony, Belfast commanded a paramilitary organization known as the Anti-Terrorist Unit that was directed to provide protection for the Liberian president and additional dignitaries of the Liberian government. Between 1999 and 2002, in his role as commander of the unit, Belfast and his associates committed 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.

"Today's conviction provides a measure of justice to those who were victimized by the reprehensible acts of Charles Taylor Jr. and his associates," Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey said. "It sends a powerful message to human rights violators around the world that, when we can, we will hold them fully accountable for their crimes."

"This is the first case in the United States to charge an individual with criminal torture. I hope this case will serve as a model to future prosecutions of this type. I also hope today's verdict helps those who were victims of torture in Liberia rest a bit easier, although nothing can erase the physical and mental scars that resulted from the punishments they endured." stated U.S. Attorney R. Alexander Acosta.

"This historic conviction is the culmination of extensive efforts by many to bring Charles Taylor Jr. to justice for his crimes," said Julie L. Myers, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE. "The United States has always been a place of refuge and freedom from oppression for millions. We must never deny safe haven to those with a genuine and legitimate fear of persecution. But we must also ensure that those who come here seeking freedom and the rule of law do not have to fear that their persecutor may become their neighbor."

"The crimes for which Mr. Belfast has been convicted represent some of the most horrific acts imaginable," said Arthur M. Cummings III, Executive Assistant Director, FBI National Security Branch. "I'd

like to personally thank our Washington Field Office agents and our partners at ICE who worked tirelessly to uncover the facts in this case and expose these deplorable crimes.”

Belfast was 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.

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

The charges of torture, conspiracy to commit torture and conspiracy to use a firearm during the commission of a violent crime carry a maximum prison sentence of 20 years each. The charge of using a firearm during the commission of a violent crime carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 9, 2009.

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 Domestic Security Section of the Criminal Division. National Security Division Trial Attorney Brenda Sue Thornton and Criminal Division Attorneys John Cox and John-Alex Romano also provided assistance.

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