



Department of Justice

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MICHIGAN MAN WHO OPERATED RESIDENTIAL FACILITY FOR YOUTH IN HAITI INDICTED FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS AT THE FACILITY

WASHINGTON – The operator of Morning Star Center, a residential facility located in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, that provided food and shelter to minors, has been charged with offenses involving the sexual abuse of minors in Haiti, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Wifredo A. Ferrer of the Southern District of Florida and Director John Morton, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Matthew Andrew Carter, aka “William Charles Harcourt” and “Bill Carter,” 66, of Brighton, Mich., was charged in a superseding indictment filed yesterday in the Southern District of Florida with four counts of traveling in foreign commerce for the purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct with minors. On May 8, 2011, Carter was arrested in Miami on a criminal complaint filed in the Southern District of Florida. He is currently detained.

“The acts that the defendant is charged with committing, quite simply, defy belief. As charged in the indictment, he preyed upon and terrorized impoverished Haitian children who were in dire need of the services offered by the Morning Star Center – the very children he was purporting to help,” said Assistant Attorney General Breuer. “As this indictment shows, we will not allow sexual predators to avoid facing justice by committing their crimes in foreign countries. Together with our law enforcement partners abroad, we are determined to combat the sexual abuse of children no matter where it occurs.”

“This defendant preyed on innocent Haitian children living in severely depressed conditions, making his conduct particularly deplorable,” said U.S. Attorney Ferrer. “Rather than using Morning Star as he promised – to administer aid and provide sanctuary to needy children – he used the center to manipulate, abuse and sexually exploit them. Sexual predators like this defendant cannot act with impunity. We will pursue and prosecute them, no matter where they choose to commit their heinous crimes.”

“Few crimes are as despicable as the ones committed against these children in Haiti. For years, he sexually abused poor and orphaned children who depended upon him for food and shelter – all under the guise of doing noble work,” said ICE Director Morton, “ICE is committed to working with our partners here and abroad to catch individuals, like this man, who engage in child sex tourism.”

According to court documents, prior to his arrest, Carter operated and lived at Morning Star Center in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Morning Star Center, which Carter operated since the mid-1990s, was a residential facility that provided shelter, food and education to Haitian minors. The minors who lived at the center were orphans or from impoverished families who could not support them. From the mid-1990s to the present, Carter frequently traveled back and forth between the United States and the center in Haiti, often to raise funds for the continued operation of the center. According to court documents, Carter allegedly sexually abused several minors in his care and custody at Morning Star Center during this time period. As alleged in court documents, Carter required the child victims to engage in illicit sexual conduct in exchange for gifts or money or in order to remain at the center and continue receiving food, shelter and schooling.

The case against Carter was investigated by ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Miami; the ICE HSI Assistant Attache's Office in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; and the ICE HSI Santo Domingo Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit. Substantial assistance was provided by the FBI's Washington and Miami Field Offices, the U.S. Secret Service in Miami, and the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Bonnie L. Kane of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Maria K. Medetis of the Southern District of Florida.

If convicted, Carter faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for one count of child sex tourism and a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison for each of the other three child sex tourism counts.

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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