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Friday, January 18, 2013

Former Minister Pleads Guilty in North Carolina to Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct in Haiti

WASHINGTON – A former minister pleaded guilty today in North Carolina to engaging in illicit sexual conduct in Haiti, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina Anne M. Tompkins and Brock D. Nicholson, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Georgia and the Carolinas.

Larry Michael Bollinger, 67, of Gastonia, N.C., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge David S. Cayer in the Western District of North Carolina to two counts of engaging in illicit sexual conduct in a foreign place. Bollinger was charged in an indictment filed on May 15, 2012.

According to filed court documents and court proceedings, Bollinger was a former Lutheran minister who performed missionary work in Haiti. Court records show that Bollinger regularly travelled to Haiti and served as the Haiti director for a Lutheran charity. Bollinger admitted that from about August 2009 to October 2009, he sexually molested four Haitian females, between the ages of 11 and 16. According to court records, one of the victims said that Bollinger offered to give her food and money in exchange for sexual acts.

Bollinger has been in federal custody since he was charged in May 2012. Each count of engaging in illicit sexual conduct in a foreign place carries a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. A sentencing date for Bollinger has not been set yet.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimlani M. Ford of the Western District of North Carolina and Trial Attorney Michael W. Grant of the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS). The investigation was conducted by ICE-HSI.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys’ offices and CEOS, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

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Criminal Division

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