



Department of Justice

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WOMAN INDICTED FOR TRAFFICKING YOUNG WOMEN FROM NIGERIA TO WORK FOR HER AS NANNIES

*Bidemi Bello Charged with Forcing Two Victims to Care for Her Daughter and
Perform Household Chores,
Yet Never Paying Them for Their Years of Work*

ATLANTA, GA - BIDEMI BELLO, 41, a former resident of Buford, Georgia and a citizen of Nigeria, was arraigned today before United States Magistrate Judge Janet King, following an indictment issued by a federal grand jury on September 10, 2010. BELLO faces federal charges of forced labor, trafficking with respect to forced labor, document servitude and alien harboring.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the case, "Forcing young women to work without compensation for their services is modern day slavery. The laws of the United States protect all victims from such abuse, regardless of where they came from or how they came to be in the United States."

"The use of violence, threats and intimidation to force individuals to work is reprehensible and illegal," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "In our country, we have the right to choose to perform or not perform labor or services, and the Department of Justice is committed to prosecuting individuals who force persons to do work against their will."

Brian D. Lamkin, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Atlanta Field Office, stated: "Human Trafficking is not only a global problem but a very real problem for the FBI and its law enforcement and community based partners in the Atlanta area as well. Victims of human trafficking are often fearful and reluctant to talk with law enforcement. The victims are often traumatized through violence or intimidation and are often immigrants from other countries and, as such, unsure of who to turn to for help. The FBI would like to encourage anyone with information regarding human trafficking to contact their nearest FBI Field Office. Providing the much needed relief from such exploitation is a

very gratifying endeavor for the FBI agents working these matters.”

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: The indictment alleges that BELLO brought one young woman from Nigeria to Georgia and compelled her to work in BELLO’s home without pay from October 2001 through March 2004. The indictment further alleges that, after her first victim escaped, BELLO brought a second young woman from Nigeria to Georgia and compelled the labor of the second young woman from November 2004 until April 2006. The indictment alleges that BELLO threatened, physically abused, and isolated both victims from their families in order to force them to work for her without pay, and that she took custody of each victim’s passport and government identification documents in order to maintain their services. This is known as “document servitude.”

Each of the four labor trafficking charges carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. The two document servitude counts carry a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Lastly, the alien harboring count carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

(NEWS MEDIA NOTE: There is a brief video statement related to this case available at <http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan/press/videoindex.html>. Broadcast video clips are available for selected news releases and can be accessed for download and use from the office website for a limited period. Generally, these video clips will be taken off the website within a few days to allow server room for new clips, so be advised to download as soon as they are available.)

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment only contains charges. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government’s burden to prove the defendant’s guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations.

Assistant United States Attorney Susan Coppedge and Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division Deputy Chief Karima Maloney are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney’s Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet

address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.justice.gov/usao/gan