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FORMER PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN PRISON FOR SEXUALLY ABUSING CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   October 10, 2012

David B. Fein, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, Peace Corps Acting Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet and Peter Vincent, Director of Homeland Security Investigations, Office of International Affairs, announced that JESSE OSMUN, 33, was sentenced today by Chief United States District Judge Alvin W. Thompson in Hartford to 180 months of imprisonment, followed by 10 years of supervised release, for sexually abusing four minor girls, all under the age of six, while he was a volunteer with the United States Peace Corps in South Africa.

"Instead of promoting peace and providing much needed assistance consistent with the mission of the Peace Corps, this volunteer took advantage of his position and sexually abused vulnerable young children at an AIDS center pre-school in South Africa," said U.S. Attorney Fein. "I commend Peace Corps OIG, Homeland Security Investigations and the South African Police Service for their thorough investigation of this matter. Their collaborative efforts, and this strict sentence, have stopped this child predator. Our work for the victims continues as we help to put in place a restitution fund to provide assistance to the victims in the aftermath of the sexual exploitation crimes committed by this defendant."

"I appreciate the well-coordinated efforts of the Department of Justice, Peace Corps OIG, ICE Homeland Security Investigations and the South African Police Service, to ensure that justice was served in this case," said Peace Corps Acting Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet. "The Peace Corps has no tolerance for abuse of any kind, and our deepest sympathies are with all the victims involved."

"As this sentence demonstrates, there will be no refuge for child sexual predators who believe that they can victimize children outside the United States," said Peter Vincent, director of HSI's Office of International Affairs. "No place is too distant or too remote to escape the attention of HSI special agents, who conduct these types of investigations worldwide. This case represents the very essence of the determination of HSI to capture and successfully prosecute an individual whose primary objective was to sexually abuse vulnerable children. Investigating a case such as this requires an enormous amount of hard work and cooperation among numerous law enforcement agents, officials and agencies. I want to thank our partners at the U.S. Attorney's office, along with our South African counterparts, for their tireless efforts and collaboration in this investigation."

According to court documents and statements made in court, OSMUN was sworn in as a Peace Corps volunteer in early 2010 and began his service at a non-governmental organization ("NGO") in South Africa that provides education, food and other services to children, many of whom are orphans. In May 2011, OSMUN resigned from the Peace Corps after being confronted by the program director of the NGO with allegations of sexual abuse. He returned to the United States on June 2, 2011. Shortly thereafter, Peace Corps OIG and ICE Homeland Security Investigations agents, working with members of the South African Police Services, began investigating the allegations of abuse.

The investigation revealed that, while volunteering at the NGO, OSMUN enticed four young girls, all of whom were under the age of six, to engage in illicit sexual acts with him. OSMUN persuaded the children to engage in this conduct by playing games with them and providing them with candy. OSMUN sexually abused one of the victims approximately two times a week over the course of approximately five months.

On August 4, 2011, OSMUN was arrested at his home in Milford, Conn. On June 27, 2012, he pleaded guilty to one count of traveling from the United States to South Africa to engage in illicit sexual conduct with children.

OSMUN has been detained since his arrest.

Judge Thompson has ordered restitution and a hearing will be scheduled within 60 days to determine how much restitution OSMUN will be ordered to pay and how the funds will be disseminated. The Department

of Justice, the Peace Corps and the U.S. Embassy in South Africa are working together to ensure that assistance is provided to the victims in this case.

This matter was investigated by the Peace Corps Office of Inspector General and ICE Homeland Security Investigations. Investigative assistance has been provided by members of the South African Police Service, Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations; ICE's attaché office in Pretoria, South Africa; the ICE Cybercrimes Center in Fairfax, Virginia; the United States Department of State's regional security office in Durban, South Africa, and the South Africa National Prosecuting Authority.

The case was prosecuted by United States Attorney David B. Fein, Assistant United States Attorney Krishna R. Patel, and Trial Attorney Bonnie Kane of the Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

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