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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, July 31, 2013

**Michigan Man Sentenced to 165 Years for Child Sex Tourism Offenses**

A former Michigan resident was sentenced today in Miami to 165 years in prison, followed by a lifetime of supervised release, for child sex tourism offenses, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Mythili Raman of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Wifredo A. Ferrer of the Southern District of Florida, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Deputy Director Daniel Ragsdale, and Special Agent in Charge Alysa D. Erichs of the ICE Homeland Security Investigation's (HSI) Miami Office.

Matthew Andrew Carter, 68, aka "William Charles Harcourt" and "Bill Carter," formerly of Brighton, Mich., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Joan A. Lenard of the Southern District of Florida. On Feb. 28, 2013, a jury found Carter guilty of five counts of traveling in foreign commerce from the United States to Haiti for the purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct with children and one count of attempting to do so.

"For 15 years, Matthew Carter, under the guise of serving as an international humanitarian, sexually abused more than 50 Haitian children," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Raman. "He held himself out as a savior to vulnerable children in Haiti, but in fact cruelly forced those children to choose between poverty and submitting to repeated sexual abuse. Child sex tourism is a heinous crime, and today's sentence demonstrates our commitment to bringing the weight of justice on anyone who seeks to exploit our most vulnerable citizens, wherever they reside."

"Today's sentence brings to a close a horrific chapter in the lives of these victims," said U.S. Attorney Ferrer. "While nothing can ever undo the abuse these victims endured throughout the years, we hope that today's sentence restores them with some sense of confidence and trust, and satisfaction that justice has been served."

"Crimes against children are some of the most heinous our agency investigates," said ICE Deputy Director Daniel Ragsdale. "It is even more despicable that Mr. Carter used his position of trust to abuse children who relied on him for care. Today's sentence should serve as notice to other child predators. We will find you, arrest you and make sure that you are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, from 1995 to 2011, Carter resided at and operated the Morning Star Center near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, prior to his arrest on May 8, 2011. The Morning Star Center was a residential facility that provided shelter, food, clothing and school tuition to Haitian children. The children who lived at the Morning Star Center were from impoverished families that could not feed, educate or otherwise support their children. The evidence at trial showed that Carter specifically targeted children in need and preyed on their vulnerability. Between 1995 and 2011, Carter frequently traveled between the United States and Haiti in order to raise funds from churches and donors for the continued operation of the center. Carter sexually and physically abused the children in his care and custody at the center during this period of time. According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Carter used force to get these children to comply with his sexual demands and required the children to participate in sexual acts in order to receive food, remain at the center and/or continue to receive school tuition payments.

At trial, 16 Haitian victims who resided at the Morning Star Center between 1995 and 2011 testified. Additionally, four witnesses testified that they were sexually abused by Carter in London during the 1970s. Carter previously was charged with and acquitted of charges related to the sexual abuse of children in London, Cairo and Winter Haven, Fla.

The case was investigated by HSI Miami, HSI Country Attaché Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and the HSI Santo Domingo Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit. Substantial assistance was provided by the U.S. Secret Service Miami field office; Haitian National Police Brigade for the Protection of Minors; Haitian Social Services; Ministry of the Interior for Haiti; Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Regional Security Office for the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince; Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince; London Metropolitan Police Service; FBI's Washington, Boston and Miami

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Field Offices; ICE-HSI Attaché's Offices in London and Cairo; U.S. Coast Guard; and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service in Port-au-Prince.

The case was 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.

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Criminal Division

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