

U.S. Department of Justice

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District of Connecticut*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 4, 2011

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**PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER CHARGED WITH
SEXUALLY ABUSING CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA**

David B. Fein, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, Assistant Attorney General **Lanny A. Breuer** of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, **Kathy A. Buller**, Peace Corps Inspector General, and **Bruce M. Foucart**, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations office in Boston, announced that **JESSE OSMUN**, 31, of Glen Street, Milford, was arrested today and charged in a federal criminal complaint with traveling from the United States to South Africa to engage in illicit sexual conduct with multiple children who were all younger than six years of age.

The criminal complaint alleges that OSMUN traveled to South Africa on January 29, 2010. On March 25, 2010, OSMUN was sworn in as a Peace Corps volunteer and began service as a volunteer at the Umvoti Aids Center (UAC) in Greytown, South Africa. The UAC is a non-governmental organization that provides support to the residents of the Greytown area affected by the AIDS virus. UAC also provides education, food, and other child development services to children between the ages of three and 15. The UAC also has a center for the younger children often referred to as the preschool.

It is alleged that OSMUN, while volunteering at the UAC preschool, sexually molested at least five minor girls, all of whom were under the age of six, for approximately one year. It is further alleged that OSMUN engaged in illicit sexual conduct with one of the girls, who is approximately five-years-old, approximately two times a week over the course of five months.

"This defendant is alleged to have sexually abused very young girls, sometimes in exchange for candy, while he served as a Peace Corps volunteer at an AIDS center in South Africa," said U.S. Attorney Fein. "We are committed to prosecuting those who sexually exploit children, the most vulnerable in society, in this country and abroad. I want to commend the diligent, swift and coordinated efforts of the Peace Corps' Office of Inspector General and ICE Homeland Security Investigations in investigating this matter and arresting this individual."

"Mr. Osmun is charged with a shocking breach of the power entrusted to him as a Peace Corps volunteer," said Assistant Attorney General Breuer. "Allegedly, he repeatedly sexually abused five minor girls under the age of six – horrific crimes. Along with the international operation we announced yesterday – Operation Delego – this case is another example that the

Justice Department will do everything in its power to bring to justice those who would exploit children, whether at home or abroad.”

“We are committed to vigorous investigation and prosecution of those who exploit the mission of the Peace Corps to prey on innocent victims,” said Peace Corps Inspector General Buller.

“This arrest represents the very essence of the determination of federal, state and local law enforcement authorities to capture an individual whose primary objective, allegedly, was to sexually abuse vulnerable children,” said ICE HSI Special Agent in Charge Foucart. “I hope that this arrest sends a clear message that we will continue to aggressively pursue individuals who engage in this behavior to ensure that there is no place to hide here in the United States or anywhere in the world.”

After being confronted by the UAC program director in May 2011, OSMUN resigned from the Peace Corps. OSMUN returned to the United States on June 2, 2011.

Following OSMUN’s arrest today at his Milford residence, he appeared before United States Magistrate Judge Holly B. Fitzsimmons in Bridgeport and has been ordered detained.

If convicted of the charge of traveling outside of the United States to engage in sexual conduct with a minor, OSMUN faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 30 years and a fine of up to \$250,000.

U.S. Attorney Fein stressed that a complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Charges are only allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is being 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 (SAPS); ICE’s attaché office in Pretoria, South Africa; the ICE Cybercrimes Center in Fairfax, Virginia, and the United States Department of State’s regional security office in Durban, South Africa. The case is being 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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