

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Woman Arrested And Charged With Sex Trafficking Of Minor; Faces Life In Prison

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ST. THOMAS -- Jennifer Bowen-Dodoo, 51, made her initial appearance in District Court today before District Court Judge Curtis V. Gomez after her arrest on St. Thomas Thursday for sex trafficking of a 13-year-old female minor, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced via press release this evening.

Judge Gomez remanded Bowen-Dodoo to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service pending a detention hearing scheduled for December 7, 2015.

According to a criminal complaint filed in the District Court, Bowen-Dodoo directed a 13-year-old female to become involved in a sexual relationship with a 58-year-old adult

male, and demanded that the male make monthly deposits into Bowen-Dodoo's bank account. In addition to the monthly deposits, Bowen-Dodoo periodically demanded other cash payments in exchange for facilitating the male's continued access to the minor. If convicted, Bowen-Dodoo faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison. She would also face a fine of up to \$250,000.

"Adults who target children for sexual exploitation, regardless of their age, should consider themselves targets by HSI and our law enforcement partners," said Angel M. Melendez, special agent in charge of HSI in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. "Child exploitation, in all its forms, is a very serious crime and its investigation is a priority for HSI."

United States Attorney Sharpe reminds the public that a criminal complaint is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

Suspected child exploitation or missing children cases may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children via its toll-free 24-hour hotline at 202-514-5678, or to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) at (340) 693-2250.

This case is being investigated by HSI, with the assistance of the Virgin Islands Police Department and Human Services. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Everard E. Potter.