

# TURNABOUT WOULD BE FAIR PLAY: US SEEKS 147 YEAR TORTURE SENTENCE

This report from MSNBC is almost sublimely  
ironic:

U.S. prosecutors want a Miami judge to sentence the son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor to 147 years in prison for torturing people when he was chief of a brutal paramilitary unit during his father's reign.

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A recent Justice Department court filing describes torture – which the U.S. has been accused of in the war on terror – as a "flagrant and pernicious abuse of power and authority" that warrants severe punishment of Taylor.

"It undermines respect for and trust in authority, government and a rule of law," wrote Assistant U.S. Attorney Caroline Heck Miller in last week's filing. "The gravity of the offense of torture is beyond dispute."

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Elise Keppler, senior counsel at Human Rights Watch, said Monday that the organization has long pressed for investigations and prosecution of those responsible for torture around the world. The Emmanuel conviction is a big step forward, she said.

"This whole process has sent a message that when it comes to the most serious crimes, there cannot be impunity," Keppler said. "Without a penalty that fits the gravity of the crime, it risks sending a message that these crimes will be tolerated."

Huh. Go figure. I wonder who will prosecute the the denizens of the Bush Administration for the same acts?