

Beat: Travel

Zimbabwe orders deportation of former U.S. Congressman Mel Reynolds

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USPA News - A Zimbabwe court on Friday ordered the deportation of former U.S. Congressman Melvin Reynolds after he was convicted of violating immigration laws, reports said. Charges for possessing pornography were dropped.

Reynolds, 62, pleaded guilty to staying in the South African country on an expired business visa, which had expired on November 27, 2013. He was convicted and sentenced to pay a fine of 100 U.S. dollars or spend five days in prison, CNN reported. Zimbabwean attorney Arthur Gurira said Reynolds intended to pay the fine on Saturday morning, after which the former Illinois congressman will face immediate deportation. A second charge under Zimbabwe's strict anti-pornography laws was dropped. Reynolds faced the second charge after being found in possession of pornographic material, in violation of Zimbabwe's Censorship and Entertainment Control Act. The former politician also refused to reveal passwords to encrypted files on his iPhone 4s, CNN reported. The Harare court dropped the pornography charge after the prosecution failed to produce authority from the prosecutor-general to proceed. Reynolds was arrested at a hotel in Harare on Monday. He had entered the country in November on a 14-day business visa which was renewed once before it expired. He never attempted to extend the visa after November 27, according to official court records. Reynolds was elected to Illinois' 2nd Congressional District in 1992 before resigning three years later after being sentenced to prison. He was convicted on charges of sexual assault, obstruction of justice, and solicitation of child pornography over his relationship with a 16-year-old campaign worker.

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