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UK Teen Claims She Was Tortured Into Trafficking Cannabis as Thai Police Deny Involvement

July 7, 2025

– Categories: Crime



A British teenager is at the centre of a growing international controversy after she claimed she was tortured and forced into smuggling cannabis worth £200,000 out of Thailand.

Bella May Culley, 19, who is currently being held in a Georgian prison, told a court in Tbilisi that she was threatened, beaten, and coerced into carrying the drugs. The young woman, who says she is pregnant, showed the court a scar on her arm, which she claims is the result of torture.

“I didn’t want to do this, I was forced under torture,” Culley told the court. Her lawyer, Malkhaz Salakaia, supported her statement, claiming she and her family were threatened with beheading if she refused. According to him, the threats included specific details about her younger brother and her parents’ address, along with a video of a person being executed.

Culley was initially reported missing in Thailand before being detained in Georgia on charges of illegally purchasing, storing, and importing a large amount of marijuana. Her lawyer insists she never even touched the bag containing the drugs, which was allegedly packed and loaded into the plane’s cargo hold without her involvement.

Adding to the seriousness of her claims, Salakaia accused corrupt Thai police officers of being part of the smuggling operation. He said that Culley had approached a Thai officer for help, only to find out he was connected to the same criminal group.

In response, Thai police have strongly denied any wrongdoing. Police Lieutenant General Choengron Rimpadee released a statement rejecting the accusations, stating there is “absolutely no factual basis” for Culley’s claims. Authorities also shared CCTV footage showing Culley passing through Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi Airport without any signs of distress.

“There is no evidence whatsoever that any immigration or police officers forced or threatened the suspect to smuggle drugs out of the country,” Rimpadee said.

Despite her legal team’s efforts to secure bail, Culley remains in custody in Georgia. Her lawyer says her testimony will soon reveal more about her alleged ordeal and reinforce her innocence.

As legal proceedings continue, the case raises difficult questions about trafficking, international law, and how young people can become trapped in dangerous criminal networks, sometimes, they claim, against their will.

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