

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 17 JULY 2015**

**RE: PAIR SENTENCED FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Veeran Palan (34) was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment, and his co-accused Edwina Norris (28) was sentenced to 17 years imprisonment in the Port Shepstone Regional Court today following their conviction on charges relating to human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

In June 2013, the accused lured two women from Cape Town to Durban on the promise of employment. Accused 2 was known to the complainants as they had grown up in the same neighbourhood. She, with the assistance of her co-accused, promised one woman a job as a cleaner in a Margate hotel and the other a job as a waitress in Durban. The women who were both unemployed and living in impoverished conditions believed the offer to be genuine and accepted.

Accused 1 sent them bus tickets and cell phone airtime as well as money to buy food on their trip from Cape Town. On arrival in Port Shepstone, the women were taken to a house in Oslo Beach where they were told that they had to work as prostitutes and 'sleep' with clients as they owed him money for the bus tickets.

Accused 2 purchased clothes such as lingerie and underwear for the complainants. These had to be worn by the complainants when meeting clients. The complainants were made to stand in a line with other females while clients had the opportunity of selecting which female they wanted. After payment of an amount of money to the accused, they went to a bedroom with the selected female.

The complainants were not allowed to leave the house except under guard and supervision by the accused.

The complainants were rescued by the police when one of them contacted her mother (via cell phone) with the name of a bar they were in.

In aggravation of sentence senior state advocate Val Dafele told the court that the accused's actions were premeditated and they deceived the complainants for financial gain. She added that the accused breached the rights of the complainants by allowing men to choose them for sex; they had no choice in the matter.

Accused 1 was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for each of the two trafficking charges, 1 year for keeping a brothel, 1 year each for the two kidnapping charges, 1 year each for the two charges of procuring a female for sexual exploitation, thus resulting in a total of 25 years. The presiding officer ordered that the sentences run concurrently with 10 years sentence for count 1. He was also fined R10 000 or 5 months imprisonment for benefitting from the proceeds of prostitution.

Accused 2 was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment for each of the two trafficking charges, 1 month imprisonment for keeping a brothel, 1 year each for the two kidnapping charges, 1 year each for the two charges of procuring a female for sexual exploitation, thus resulting in a total of 16 years and 1 month imprisonment. The presiding officer ordered that the sentences run concurrently with the 6 years sentence for count 1.

The Directorate of Public Prosecutions in KZN welcomes this sentence. We are pleased that the courts are taking a stance against crimes of this nature. Human trafficking is a global problem and members of the public need to be cautious and educate themselves.

Kind Regards,

**Natasha Kara**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP KZN**

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