



MEDIA RELEASE

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Human Trafficking Conviction First for SA.

The first conviction for a human trafficking offence in South Africa needs to be applauded. We congratulate the prosecutors of the National Prosecuting Authority and the investigating team of the South African Police Services for a job well done.

It is becoming increasingly more well known that South Africa is a major source, destination and transport country used by organized crime syndicates that exploit victims of human trafficking, and that the majority of them are women and children used for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Internationally, human trafficking cases are notorious for being complicated and difficult to prosecute. This success shows that we are serious about the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of victims. It also shows that we have the skills and necessary resolve to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators.

It is reassuring to know that even though the proposed Human Trafficking Bill has not been passed yet, that a precedent has been set by this conviction to prosecute and convict criminals for human trafficking crimes using other available laws.

We therefore urge the government to review the proposed Trafficking Act and to pass it at the earliest possible opportunity. This will go a long way to streamlining the prosecution process as well as, most importantly, providing a far more comprehensive framework for the protection and restoration of victims of the traumatic experience of being tricked, transported, trapped and used.

Although South Africa progressed from the third of four possible tier levels to tier two on the US State Departments Trafficking in Persons Report between 2008 and 2009, we could and should be on tier level one. The passing of the Trafficking Bill together with this excellent investigation and prosecution work would go a long way to making it happen.

Doctors for Life International, is an association of more than 1800 medical doctors. DFL is actively involved in helping people caught up in trafficking and prostitution and has rendered expert evidence to the Constitutional Court, Law Reform Commission and Parliament, regarding the social and psychological consequences. Visit www.dfl.org.za