

South Africa: Human Trafficking Bill Signed Into Law

SAnews.gov.za / 30 JULY 2013

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201307301256.html>

President Jacob Zuma has signed the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill into law, giving South Africa, for the first time, a single statute that tackles human trafficking holistically and comprehensively.

The new law provides for a maximum penalty of R100-million or life imprisonment or both in the case of a conviction.

Spokesperson in the Presidency Mac Maharaj said on Monday that the legislative framework dealing with this issue had until now been fragmented.

"For instance, the legislation dealing with sexual offences addresses the trafficking of persons for purposes of sexual exploitation only, while the Children's Act addresses the trafficking of children specifically," Maharaj said.

Besides creating the main offence of trafficking in persons, the new legislation also creates offences such as debt bondage, possessing, destroying or tampering with travel documents, and using the services of victims of trafficking, all of which contribute to innocent persons becoming victims of this modern-day form of slavery.

Maharaj warned that the penalties for these offences were appropriately severe, as a deterrent to would-be perpetrators.

"The main offence of trafficking in persons, for instance, attracts a maximum penalty of R100-million or life imprisonment or both in the case of a conviction. Compensation is furthermore payable by the perpetrators to their victims."

In addition to creating very specific offences that have a bearing on trafficking in persons, Maharaj said the legislation also focused on the plight of the victims, providing them with protection and assistance to overcome their traumatic experiences.

The new legislation gives effect to South Africa's international obligations in terms of a United Nations Protocol.

"While the legislation has been signed into law, its operationalization is dependent on regulations that are required to be made by a number of role-playing departments such as Home Affairs," Maharaj noted.

"This is receiving urgent attention, and the plan is to have the Act put into operation as soon as possible."

[South African Government](#) (Pretoria)

South Africa: Government Dismayed At Reports of Child Prostitution

PRESS RELEASE - *Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)* || 30

July 2013

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201307310103.html>

Government has noted media reports which allege that child prostitution is rife, and rapidly growing, in the eastern Free State region due to poverty.

The reports indicate that some parents send their daughters on to the streets to earn an income to help feed the family.

Government echoes Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe's call on South Africans to stop using poverty as an excuse to commit crime.

Government condemns such alleged actions and reminds parents that the South African constitution clearly states that children have the right to be loved and protected from harm and the right to basic education.

Acting GCIS CEO, Phumla Williams said, "We call on the law enforcement agencies to urgently look into the matter. These girls do not belong to the streets, but instead should be in school and be cared for and loved by their parents. Children's rights are enshrined in the supreme law of the country - the Constitution, which is the cornerstone of our democracy."

Government has put in place systems such as the Bill of Rights, the Charter of Children's Basic Education Rights, supporting legislation, policies and programmes aimed at protecting children.

President Jacob Zuma has also signed into law the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill, which is aimed at addressing the scourge of trafficking in persons holistically and comprehensively.

The police and the existing courts are also empowered under the Domestic Violence Act, Sexual Offences Act and Children's Act to arrest, prosecute and convict perpetrators of violence against women and children.

Government remains committed to fighting children abuse to ensure that they are and feel safe.

"We urge communities to work together with law enforcement agencies and report such crimes. It takes a village to raise a child, and what we do in defence of our children will define us as a caring country," Williams said.
