

Stories from survivors across the world

Miss Da (pseudonym), 22, was a Thai massage therapist in Bangkok, Thailand. One day a Thai lady by the name of Pin (pseudonym) came to visit her as a customer. Pin said she liked her way of massage and asked if Da would like to work in South Africa, as Pin had a good friend who runs a spa in Johannesburg (South Africa). The payment / salary would be at least 4 times higher than Da received in Thailand. An airline ticket would be arranged for Da, and she could repay the money to Pin at a later stage when she had the first salary payment.

After landing in Johannesburg, she was taken to a brothel and her passport and air ticket were confiscated. She was then told that she had to work as a prostitute and furthermore that she owed the recruiter R60,000 (SIXTY THOUSAND RAND) for the arrangement that had been made for her to come to South Africa. Sad and desperate, she had to face the ordeal, forsaking her dreams of getting money to finance her family and children. Worse, she could not run away since she did not know the area and she could not communicate in English to ask for help.

Interventions by the Royal Thai Embassy

In 2005, the Royal Thai Embassy helped 32 victims of human trafficking. In 2006, the number jumped to 55, which was nearly double that of the previous year. This number doesn't include prostitutes who were not identified as trafficked victims, but did come to seek help from the Embassy to go home. This latter number was a lot higher.

Success story

The Royal Thai Embassy has received a lot of phone calls from victims who were held against their will in brothels or houses. Thanks to the Organized Crime Unit within the South African Police Service (SAPS), especially Director Ebrahim Kadwa and Supt. Andre Neethling, the victims were successfully rescued after the Embassy contacted the Unit.