

Forum seeks more reforms to human trafficking law

PARTICIPANTS URGE STEPS TO MAKE STATUTE LESS AMBIGUOUS

BY SIHAM AL NAJAMI
Staff Reporter

Dubai Senior officials attending a forum on combating human trafficking yesterday said the federal law on human trafficking needed more amendments and clarification.

During the first day of the two-day forum, Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfan Tamim, Chief of Dubai Police, called for the restating of the current Federal Law 51 of November 2006 in order to cover all forms of human trafficking. He called for the elimination of any possible ambiguities in the wording of the law.

The definition of human trafficking in this law is closely aligned with the definition outlined in the Palermo Protocol and by other international legislation.

According to Dr Saed Al Gafli, executive director of the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs and a member of the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, the committee is working on the final stages of a new law on human trafficking.

The new law will place emphasis on the significance of upgrading protec-

“The procedures on dealing with cases of human trafficking are still not quite clear. Crimes of human trafficking in the UAE are quite recent but the nation is taking significant strides to combat [them].”

tion and support to human trafficking victims and witnesses. He added that it will expand on the definition of the Palermo Protocol.

According to him there are eight cases of human trafficking for which a criminal can be convicted and handed a life sentence under the law.

“Cases of human trafficking are not rigid ones and the law should give... room for flexibility,” he said.

Challenges facing public prosecutors in their investigations include the identification and classification of cases of human trafficking which could be mistaken for prostitution, according to Ali Humaid Bin Khatim, a consultant and deputy head of the department investigating cases of human trafficking at the Public Prosecution.

Ali Humaid Bin Khatim
Consultant

“The procedures on dealing with cases of human trafficking are still not quite clear. Crimes of human trafficking in the UAE are quite recent but the nation is taking significant strides to combat [them],” he said.

More studies

He suggested that more studies should be undertaken to cover different methods of smuggling human trafficking victims into the country. He also called for more investigations into how, in certain cases, victims enter the country on residence visas sponsored by UAE nationals.

According to Afra Al Basti, chief executive of the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, the foundation, within three months, will work on splitting their venue to separate victims

of human trafficking from victims of domestic and child abuse.

The foundation has been faced with the huge challenge of accommodating human trafficking victims with sexually transmitted diseases in the same location as children, thus placing them at risk.

“We have had a case of a victim with tuberculosis and immediately we had to medically examine everyone at the facility,” she said.

Risk mitigation

She added that the organisation could not bear to expose the children to any more health risks.

Colonel Ahmad Al Muharremi, director of the human trafficking department at the Ministry of Interior, said the UAE’s Public Prosecution had recorded 36 cases of human trafficking since the start of this year. 101 suspects have been arrested.

Captain Ahmad Bin Huthaiba, head of the department combating human trafficking at Dubai Police, said 20 cases of human trafficking had been recorded since the start of the year.

The Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC) received 66 victims from January to June.