

SAfrica: Nine Nigerian nationals appear in court on charges of human trafficking

Text of report by non-profit South African Press Association (SAPA) news agency

Nine Nigerian men arrested for alleged human trafficking have appeared in the Ermelo Magistrate's Court, Mpumalanga police said on Tuesday.

Captain Leonard Hlathi said the men appeared in court on Friday, and their case was postponed to April 16 for a bail application.

He said it was alleged that the men forcefully took a number of women from around the country to Ermelo, where they were forced into prostitution.

They were given R30 [Rand] a day for food, and from time to time they were forced to take drugs to ensure they remained addicts.

The 12 women, between the ages of 18 and 30, told the police the men took all their earnings and they were not paid for the jobs that they were doing.

"Home affairs officials confirmed that the suspects applied for asylum in South Africa, and according to the information in their application forms, they do not qualify for asylum."

He said they were being charged under the Sexual Offences Act and for kidnapping.

"These men can consider themselves a bit lucky as human trafficking laws are in the process of being legislated. These acts of the suspects were exactly equivalent to human trafficking."

Source: SAPA news agency, Johannesburg, in English 1036 gmt 23 Mar 10

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