

# **Bahraini man and Thai woman sentenced to five years for human trafficking**

High Criminal Court also fined each of the defendants BD 5,000

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Manama: A Bahraini man and a Thai woman have been sentenced to five years each for trafficking in people.

The High Criminal Court also fined each of the defendants BD 5,000 and ordered the deportation of the Thai woman after completing the jail period.

According to court documents, the Bahraini man, 39, and the Thai woman, 40, conspired in 2009 to lure a Thai woman as well as other unidentified women to Bahrain under the promise of offering them jobs.

The man, who worked as a guard, forced the women to stay in an apartment and did not let them go out. He threatened not to allow them to go to their home country unless they had sex with clients he brought to the apartment.

The case is a deja-vu scenario of how Asian and Arab women, lured by steady jobs and lucrative gains, have been exploited by unscrupulous traffickers in the Gulf.

Bahrain has taken several steps in the crackdown on the trafficking in people and has prosecuted Bahrainis and foreigners involved in the trade. Even though the steps have been praised, local religion-based groups and international organizations have been asking the authorities to do more to combat the phenomenon and clear Bahrain's name.

A massive crackdown by the culture and information ministry on "depravation" in hotels has split the country, with conservatives heaping praise on the move but with liberals saying it was against individual freedoms.

An ad-hoc parliamentary committee has recommended in a report on its investigation stringent action against owners of small hotels and furnished apartments who abused tourism and gave Bahrain a bad reputation.

Measures to fight trafficking in labourers, a massive force employed mainly in the booming construction sector, included snap inspections of work sites and setting up hotlines.

Domestic helpers who are not covered by the private sector labour law have been encouraged to report abuses so that proper assistance might be provided.

Other measures to fight human trafficking include legislation, training for governmental staff and cooperation with the United Nations and other international groups, Bahrain said in the first official assessment report on human trafficking in the Arabian Gulf.

The report was released last month.

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