

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING, CHILD PROTECTION AND THE MEDIA



**Saturday Star (04/02/2012)**

“Judge expresses human trafficking concern for ‘exotic

## The all too frequently forgotten form of trafficking in S.A

MMA awards Saturday Star with a CHAMP (with recommendations) for its article “Judge expresses human trafficking concern for ‘exotic dancers” (04/02/2012), as it raises a form of trafficking often not given any real attention in South Africa. However it is crucial to highlight some important aspects. Those working in anti-human trafficking in South Africa are aware of the fraudulent & deceitful methods employed by traffickers to both lure and keep their victims captive, which particularly in this industry, can be made to appear as if within the bounds of law.

The article details the case of the Cape Town strip club ‘Mavericks’ and the Western Cape High Court ordering the Human Rights Commission to probe the inhumane employment conditions of the foreign dancers that the club employs. The judge dismissed an urgent application by Mavericks to stop the Department of Home Affairs terminating Mavericks corporate permits, “effectively meaning all the clubs foreign dancers employed in terms of the permits would have to leave South Africa.” We learn from the article that the dancers were required to pay R2000 a week to “dance”, and the judge “said there was some concern about the living conditions and arrangement of these “so-called” exotic dancers, which could constitute human trafficking.”

It is common practice for traffickers through coercion, manipulation violence or threats of violence, or a combination of two, more or all to be employed to maintain control over victims and to force their compliance. Additionally victims are in danger of retaliation from their traffickers or slave masters, as the victims themselves are all too frequently the only witnesses to the crime of their own trafficking. These are crucial elements that should be made a priority in dealing with this case, and it is not clear from the piece that the dancers best interests are being considered.

Media Monitoring Africa would like to request a follow up piece that would probe possible criminal investigations and what assistance is provided for the dancers. Under international law, human trafficking is a crime against humanity, and its victims have the right to certain protections and assistance. Merely deporting them is thereby ignoring the victim’s rights, as they would be deported back to the country of their origin and back to the position they were in which possibly led to their trafficking in the first place, or even worse. Rescue and rehabilitation are necessary prior to repatriation.

By Melanie Hamman

Web Link: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/mavericks-permit-bid-denied-1.1227256>