

WOMAN FINED FOR SEXUALLY EXPLOITING GIRLS

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Santa Aloyo, 30, a mother of three, has been fined sh2m for recruiting underage, vulnerable girls in her brothel for sexual exploitation.

According to court documents, Aloyo, who owned a brothel at Kisenyi, Kakajjo zone in Kampala, recruited girls between the age of 14 and 17 to work as prostitutes in her lodge while pocketing the money got from the illicit trade.

The documents state that she recruited six girls between July and September 2016, put them in a room where men would enter and have sexual intercourse with them. A medical examination carried out by the Police indicated that although none of the girls contracted HIV/AIDS, they had sexually transmitted diseases.

Aloyo was arrested after a tip-off and charged with eight counts of recruiting, hiring, maintaining and receiving girls for sexual exploitation contrary to Section 3 (b) of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act.

The Law

Section 8 (a) (1) states that a person shall not engage a child in any work or trade that exposes the child to activities of sexual nature whether paid for or not.

Before passing her judgment, the Principal Grade One Magistrate of the Law Development Centre Court, Juliet Hatanga, listened to evidence from eight witnesses who include the investigative officer, medical examiner and six of the girls. Evidence before court stated that Aloyo met the girls stranded in Kampala and offered to help them, but instead took them to her lodge where they were sexually exploited.

Upon her arrest, the girls were taken into a shelter owned by Willows International, a non-government organisation which deals with issues of human trafficking.

During sentencing, Hatanga, who found that the evidence was not enough

to convict her under the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, found her guilty under Section 8 (a) of the Children's Amendment Act, 2016.

Appearing before court for sentencing yesterday, Aloyo pleaded for mercy and a non-custodial sentence on grounds that she was a widow, HIV-positive and the sole breadwinner in her family.

Through her defence attorney, Julius Byarugaba, she pleaded that a custodial sentence will have a big effect on the welfare of her children, aged between one and nine.

Aloyo's mother, who was seated on the back row of the gallery, followed the session intently while lulling the youngest baby.

In response, the senior state attorney, Loe Karungi, noted that the offence is a serious one and was an act of high immoral conduct for Aloyo to allow the six victims to get involved in acts of prostitution under her watch.

Hatanga took Aloyo's plea of being the primary caregiver of her family and handed her a sentence of sh2m and in default she will be jailed for 18 months.