Free the Domestic Worker D.G. and Protect her Immediately

Lebanese Judiciary Detains a Potential Trafficking Victim Instead of Her Exploiters

Kafa (enough) Violence & Exploitation reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Mount Lebanon the abuse of the Beninese worker D.G., where she has suffered physical abuse, exploitation at work, non-payment of wages, and confinement by her employer A.K. who had also withheld her passport and failed to regularize her residency status.

All the reported circumstances constitute indicators of human trafficking under Law No. 164/2011 on the Punishment of the Crime of Human Trafficking. However, the public prosecutor in Mount Lebanon, B.H., failed to give due consideration to these indicators and consequently did not pursue the investigation further to establish whether the crime of human trafficking had occurred.

On the contrary, he focused on the legality of the worker's residence status and issued the decision of referring her to General Security because she did not possess valid residency. This effectively resulted in detaining her, while allowing the employer to leave without conducting a thorough investigation.

In doing so, the Public Prosecutor blatantly disregarded the SOPs for the protection of victims of human trafficking adopted by the government in 2025. These SOPs emphasize that the absence of a valid residency should not constitute a barrier for potential victims to access protection, including referrals to safe shelters.

Furthermore, he completely ignored the Memo 244/2025 issued in December 2025 by the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation to all public prosecution offices. This memo also stipulates that migrant domestic workers should not be arrested during investigations, whether they are plaintiffs or defendants, if they do not have a valid residency, but rather referred to shelters. The memo explicitly requires investigators to examine the elements set out in Article 36 of the Law on Entry into, Residency in, and Exit from Lebanon, and verify whether **"the employer has failed to complete the necessary procedures and has withheld the worker's identity documents, thereby effectively preventing her from completing any administrative procedures."**

What makes it even more concerning is that all indicators are met in the case of D.G., and it was therefore only logical for the public prosecutor B.H., to apply these protective measures rather than take a decision that penalized the victim while showing leniency toward the perpetrators.

Facing this alarming reality, we ask the following:

- Who protects victims and deters perpetrators when the judiciary itself acts arbitrarily?
- What is the value and purpose of governmental decisions and Public Prosecution memos if they are not to be upheld, particularly by the very authority primarily responsible for implementing them?

Based on the above, we call for:

- The immediate release of the worker D.G. from detention and referring her to a safe shelter that grants her protection.
- The Public Prosecution at the Court of Cassation to take the necessary measures to reiterate the memo, ensure its strict enforcement, and implement the SOPs to protect victims of human trafficking.
- Holding accountable those involved in the investigation, including judges and investigators who refrain from or neglect taking all necessary measures to protect victims of violence and human trafficking.