



THE JERUSALEM POST

Israel's best-selling English daily and most-read English website

[Get TESOL Certified](#) TESOL/TEFL teacher training certification courses across the US www.OxfordSeminars.com

[Israel Exodus Population](#) The Israelites Moses led "were the fewest of all peoples" ! www.accuracygenesis.com

[Overstock iPads: \\$43.20](#) Today Only: Get \$43.20 Apple iPads. 1 Per Customer. Limited Quantities. www.NoMoreRack.com/iPad

AdChoices



Photo by: Edgard Garrido / Reuters

Gov't backs jail time for soliciting prostitution

By RUTH EGLASH
12/02/2012

Paying for sex or utilizing any type of sexual services will soon become a criminal offense.

Paying for sex or utilizing any type of sexual services will soon become a criminal offense after a bill proposed by MK Orit Zuaretz (Kadima) was approved Sunday by the Ministerial Committee for Legislation.

The bill, which was also supported by a large number of Knesset members from across the political spectrum, will be brought to a vote in the plenum on Wednesday and is likely to pass without any hitches now that it has full government backing.

"It is a new reality in Israel," declared Zuaretz, adding that she felt confident that the relevant authorities would take the new legislation seriously, including full enforcement by the police.

Zuaretz described the legislation as a central element in a series of actions designed to empower "social change with regards to prostitution and human trafficking," which in recent years has turned into a multi-million dollar industry involving thousands of individuals.

"This law aims to shift the responsibility for the offense to customers, who not only manufacture the demand for prostitution but also fuel the wheels of the sex industry," continued the MK, who initiated the legislation as part of her position as Chairwoman of the Knesset Sub-Committee for Human Trafficking.

She added that government backing of such a law showed "moral and valuable steps of the first order."

"I truly thank the ministers who supported this legislation, especially Ministers [Limor] Livnat and [Ya'akov]

Neeman," said Zuaretz, also commending the work of lawyer Rachel Gershuni, the country's national coordinator for human trafficking, who researched the issue on behalf of the Justice Ministry.

Zuaretz also said that the successful passage of her legislation was in part due to the support it received from dedicated activists, who not only organized a series of rallies worldwide to raise awareness of the issue but who also worked to lobby parliamentarians and ministers on the issue.

"Today's vote in the Ministerial Committee to approve legislation criminalizing the purchase of sexual services is a victory for all who seek to free Israel from the evils of sex trafficking and the degradation of women and children," commented Levi Lauer, Director and Founder of social action organization Atzum, which supported the legislation via its Task Force for Human Trafficking (TFHT).

“The message is clear: human bodies are no longer for sale in an enlightened society; trafficking in sexual services and prostitution are no longer legitimate enterprises on our streets; clients who rape sex slaves and make women and children the victims of their perverse power are now criminals,” he stated.

Lauer said, however, that the battle was not yet over and that all those involved need to “remain zealous in our insistence for enforcement and for the judicial agencies to do all in their power to arrest, prosecute and punish the pimps and traffickers - and now the clients, who have for far too long, turned too many of our streets and neighborhoods into comfortable environments for brothels.”

The legislation, which was also supported by Tel Aviv law firm Kabiri-Nevo-Keidar, was originally set in motion by new Meretz faction leader MK Zahava Gal-On.

Gal-On welcomed the government’s approval of the law, saying it would “lead the struggle against the circumstances that create a demand for prostitution and lead to the serious phenomena of drug addiction, degradation of women, violence, coercion and control of women within Israel’s sex industry.”

The bill is based on a similar series of laws that were first passed in Sweden in 1999 and are now known as the “Nordic model.” Most Western countries have adopted this set of legislation.

It is hoped that the new law will cause significant damage to Israel’s burgeoning sex industry and help to reduce the high levels of human trafficking and sexual slavery here.

Although there are no official figures, it is estimated that there are currently more than 15,000 individuals working in the prostitution industry in Israel, 5,000 of whom are minors. Israel has been a destination country for more than 25,000 victims of human trafficking since the 1990s.

Research undertaken by TFHT suggests that many of Israel’s prostitutes and sex slaves are controlled by pimps and some experience violence at the hands of their clients. The clients come from every segment of society and every ethnic, religious and social-economic stratum.

[About Us](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [RSS](#)

All rights reserved © 1995 - 2011 The Jerusalem Post.