

## Head of massive prostitution ring gets 18 years in prison

by Naama Cohen - Friedman

YNet News - May 10, 2012



Rami Saban and three accomplices who headed one of 'most extensive human-trafficking rings in Israel's history' jailed and ordered to compensate victims. Prosecution: Court sent strong message.

The court also ordered Saban to pay each of the 13 complainants NIS 15,000 (about \$4,000) and fined him an additional NIS 150,000 (\$40,000).

Four months ago Saban and three of his accomplices were convicted of trafficking hundreds of women into [Israel](#) for prostitution.

Justice Kaboub called the operation "one of the most complex and extensive human-trafficking affairs to be uncovered in recent years, if not ever."

David Moraidi, one of the accomplices, was sentenced to 10 years in prison and ordered to pay nine of the complainants a total of NIS 100,000 (\$26,000). Yaakov Moraidi was sentenced to six years in prison and ordered to pay the complainants NIS 5,000 (\$1,300). He was also fined NIS 60,000 (about \$16,000).

Shmuel Malka, the third accomplice, was sentenced to three years in prison and ordered to pay the complainants NIS 15,000 (\$4,000). He was also slapped with a NIS 20,000 (\$5,300) fine.

According to the indictment, the defendants smuggled hundreds of women into Israel through the border with Egypt. They used a network which located hundreds of young women in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Uzbekistan.

The court said the suspects received between \$5,000-\$7,000 for each woman they sold to an

escort service in Israel, depending on her physical appearance. The three key suspects are alleged to have pocketed millions of shekels each.

Eight men were indicted in March 2009 in connection with the human trafficking ring, but two of them became state witnesses as part of a plea bargain and linked Saban to the other suspects. Avi Yanai, Saban's business partner, was sentenced by a Russian court to 18 years in prison for his role in the operation.

Some of the women, the verdict said, were imprisoned and abused.

The court also said some of the defendants owned and operated 12 brothels in Tel Aviv and Ramat Gan between 1999 and 2004, and also operated a phone sex line between 2005 and 2006.

Saban was convicted of pandering, conspiracy to commit a crime, operating a brothel, forgery and money laundering.

Saban, the court said in the verdict, "was at the top of a pyramid of criminal and disgraceful activity. Words cannot describe the cynicism and apathy with which the defendants, headed by Saban, treated the woman.

"Nothing deters him (Saban) – not prior convictions or lengthy jail sentences," Justice Kaboub wrote.

A representative of the Tel Aviv District Prosecutor's Office said the court "sent a strong message to Israel's citizens that they will be severely punished even if they commit human-trafficking offences outside the country's borders."

Rita Chaikin of the Isha L'Isha (Woman to Woman) organization said she hoped the verdict would deter human traffickers. "It is important to understand that women who have been trafficked into Israel did not do so out of their own free will, but out of terrible distress," she said.