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Avi Yanai (right) got only 18 years for ruining the lives of "hundreds of women". That means a few months for each life ruined. A few hours or days for every rape these women experienced.

A military court in Russia has sentenced an Israeli citizen to only 18 years in prison for running a vast network of female trafficking in the Middle East and Europe.

Aside from Yanai, 83 people were arrested across Europe, 14 of them in Russia. The network is suspected to have produced tens of millions of dollars in profits for its operators, and some of the women trafficked may have been murdered by the Albanian mafia.

The court refused Yanai's request to be released on a million dollar bail. The Russian website vesti.ru reported: "The Israeli Avi Yanai marched down the hall, concealing the face of a Jewish patriarch and clutching a Torah". The Israeli has previously been arrested in Israel on suspicions of trafficking in women. He was released under bail and had his passport confiscated, but in May 2001 managed to get the passport back under a bail of 30,000 shekels. In the six months since his arrest the Israeli prosecutors did not produce an indictment or even an indictment deadline.

According to court documents, Avi Yanai and his accomplices were engaged in the business of kidnapping and smuggling hundreds of women, mostly from the former Soviet Union countries, to Israel, Italy, Spain, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Arab Emirates from 1999 to 2007 to work as prostitutes.

The criminal ring is also suspected of being involved in the murder of several of the women while smuggling them.

The international sex trafficking network recruited women with promises of placing them in legitimate work as dancers or waitresses in European countries for a fee of three to five thousand euros.

According to court papers, the women were smuggled by using forged passports stolen from Russian citizens.

“Some people, using false documents, registered fictitious companies in Russia promising people legal work abroad, mostly in Western Europe,” a senior Russian Federal Security Service investigator, Vitaliy Danilov, told Izvestia newspaper.

“They put out advertisements and people came in, bringing documents and pictures. By the time they came back to pick up their documents, work permits and Schengen-zone visas, the companies would be gone. Some 2,500 passports were stolen in all.”

“Once they got abroad, the women would end up in real slavery, sexual slavery. They didn’t get any money, their passports were usually taken and there was no way home,” Danilov added.

According to the Prosecutor General’s Office, the Albania-based network has made a huge profit of tens of millions of dollars for its operators.

So far, 83 members of the women trafficking ring have been identified and arrested across Europe, 14 of them in Russia. Those arrested in Russia have received jail terms ranging from five to 18 years.

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