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Charity head arrested for allegedly exchanging food for sex

By Amiram Barkat, Haaretz Correspondent

The Jerusalem Magistrate's Court remanded on Monday Meir David Malka, the head of a Jerusalem charity organization, who is suspected of demanding sexual favors from female clients in exchange for food.

Malka is the chairman of "Sharei Malka" (Queen's Gates), an organization which provides aid to needy families in the Neveh Ya'akov neighborhood of north Jerusalem.

Police launched an investigation in the beginning of November, after a widow called the Neveh Ya'akov police station claiming Malka exploited his status as chairman to

force women to have sexual relations with him in exchange for food supplies.

During the investigation, police realized that female social workers in the area had known about the practice for a long time. Social workers told officers that during the last four years, many women had come to them and complained of Malka's offensive suggestions and acts.

Malka was called in for questioning last Sunday. According to police, he did not deny that he had been involved with women who were served by his organization, but said he had not required them to have sex to receive food aid. He was arrested at the end of the session and remanded on Monday.

Judge Moshe Sovel corrected a police representative at the start of a session, ruling that the crime alleged against Malka involved consensual sex while exploiting his power as a service provider.

The judge decided to extend Malka's remand by an additional day, although he added that the testimony police possessed left no suspicion that he had committed a crime. He explained that a social worker had reported that additional women had made complaints about Malka, but were currently refusing to testify.

The police representative said during the hearing that the women were afraid to testify because they feared Malka's response, as a powerful man in the area. She said that in conversations several women had said they were forced to have sex with Malka to receive their food.

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