

Eight Pakistani women linked to CS Echesa deported

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Former Sports, Heritage and Culture Cabinet Secretary Rashid Echesa. PHOTO | FILE | NATION MEDIA GROUP

In Summary

- On Friday, a magistrate ordered that the women, known as belly dancers, be kept in a safe house to enable police establish whether they are victims of human trafficking.
- Defence lawyer Mr Ondieki said the eight cultural dancers from Pakistan were allowed to enter into the country by Mr Echesa to promote trans-national cultures.

The eight Pakistani women, who were flown into the country through the assistance of Sports Cabinet Secretary Rashid Echesa, have been deported.

The eight belly dancers, alongside one Indian dancer were last evening deported for violating terms of their temporary passes that

allowed them into Kenya, allegedly to promote transnational culture.

However, the women, all aged above 18 and suspected to have been victims of human trafficking were arrested at a social club in Parklands, and arraigned in court on charges of being in the country illegally.

VISAS

A statement from the Ministry of Interior Saturday evening said the women had been deported for violating regulation 26 (3) of Kenya Citizenship and Migration regulations, by engaging in activities outside of what was specified in their entry documents.

“Some have already left and last batch will leave at midnight.

"Investigations are still going on to establish the circumstances in which the women came into Kenya ostensibly to promote transnational culture but ended up in suspicious places," Interior spokeswoman Wangui Muchiri said.

On Friday, a magistrate ordered that the women, known as belly dancers, be kept in a safe house to enable police establish whether they are victims of human trafficking.

Senior principal magistrate Kennedy Cheruiyot sitting at the Milimani law courts Nairobi gave the order after being furnished with special permits issued to the eight foreign girls by Mr Echesa.

Defence lawyer Evans Ondieki told Mr Cheruiyot that the eight girls who were arrested at Balle Balle Club at Parklands "are in the country legally with full permission of CS Echesa."

Mr Ondieki said the eight cultural dancers from Pakistan were allowed to enter into the country by Mr Echesa to promote trans-national cultures.

The lawyer pleaded with the magistrate to release the girls to be detained in a safe house where Police can access them whenever they want as they investigate the owner of Balle Balle Club who flew the girls into Kenya.

"On humanitarian grounds I urge this court to release these girls as they have not bathed for the last one week, health rules require women to fresh up and bath as many times as they can afford," Mr Ondieki told the magistrate.

He said it was very regretful that Police are stifling the order of CS Echesa allowing the girls to perform in Kenya upto January 18, 2019.

He said each of the girls paid the Immigration Department Sh45,000 to be issued with the special passes.

"What government are the Police serving and what government is Mr Echesa serving. Aren't they serving the same regime," Mr Ondieki wondered.

SAFE HOUSE

He prevailed upon the court to release the girls to Mr Nadeem Khan, of Blue Heart, a non-governmental organisation against human trafficking, Violence and Child Abuse to place them in a safe house where "only him and police can access the girls for interrogation."

Although their release had been opposed vehemently by state prosecutor Ms Annette Wangia the magistrate in exercise of his inherent powers, released the girls to Mr Khan on humanitarian grounds with orders only police from the trans-national crimes desk can access the girls who are suspected to be victims of human trafficking.

The magistrate directed them to appear in court on January 8, 2019 when the proprietor of Bella Bella Club Mr Safendra Kumar Sonwani and his manager Mr Mika Osichiro will be arraigned for prosecution of human trafficking.

Mr Sonwani and Mr Osichiro were detained on Monday for interrogation over irregularly trafficking into the country the said eight girls.

But Mr Ondieki has asked the court to disregard the police fears since CS Echesa has allowed cultural promotions which is permitted in the constitution.