

Sex workers are people too

On Wednesday the 15 of June the Hong Kong public saw flashed across the Chinese language press, and on the 16 of June the SCMP, photos of a group of "40 mainland women suspected of prostitution" rounded up, interned in a crowded (14sq metre) "cage", in much the same way as animals would be. This was in public view and for a period of 13 hours as reported in the article. The photos in both presses depict the women lying on the bare ground, without visible toilet facilities, privacy or food while male police officers stand by. The image is poignant being one of powerlessness, vulnerability and visible shame, and voyeurism.

AFRO is concerned about the issue and strongly objects such arrangement by the police. We consider this act severely violated the dignity, privacy and human rights of the detained persons.

We question:

- Why this is permitted under police regulations to detain people for long hours, in such area where no toilet facilities seem available and privacy unprotected.
- Whether proper procedures were held for such detainees in police premises.

We urge Hong Kong Police:

- 1) To immediately stop using such "temporary detain area".
- 2) To review such arrangement and to investigate where there was discrimination against suspected mainland Chinese sex workers.
- 3) To improve facilities of detain areas in police premises, including temporary and normal detained area inside police stations, to improve the current condition that detainees are forced to eat, to rest and to use toilet facility in the same limited space, so as to guarantee the basic human rights of all detainees.
- 4) To follow the proper procedure, as to guarantee that all arrested persons and detainees are informed their basic legal rights, can exercise them and enjoy just, fair and reasonable treatments.
- 5) To release the detainees if the police fails to collect sufficient evidence for prosecution.
- 6) To stop sending detainees back to place of origin without trial.