

Shamsul Arefin promised four men jobs at his hotel in the Highland and charged each of them £18,000 to escape poverty in Bangladesh. But what was meant to be a new start became a nightmare. In July this year Arefin was jailed for three years on human trafficking charges at Fort William Sheriff Court.

But the four victims still live in fear of him with his links to organised crime and are struggling with emotional scars and huge debts. Sheikh described: "He forced us to work from morning to night, sometimes starting at 5am and not finishing until after midnight. I paid him £16,000 to bring me here. I borrowed it from several people so I'm still in a lot of debt. Arefin barely paid me – sometimes not at all, and I had to live in a broken caravan with four men. There was no water or heating and it was damp as the window was broken. One of my money lenders has threatened to take out my kidney if I go back to Bangladesh."

What is slavery? It is inflicted on the **vulnerable**, often more on women who are the weaker sex. It is caused by **prejudice**, victims come from communities which the wider society dislikes/ or ignores, due to race, faith, caste, homeless, orphan etc. There is **failure of the rule of law** and often no culture or capacity to enforce it.

Someone is in slavery if they are, forced to work, through mental or physical threat. Are owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse. Dehumanised and treated as a commodity or bought and sold as property. Physically constrained or have a restriction placed on his/her freedom of movement.

Could you identify a victim in your home town? Would you be willing to contact the police? These are the general indicators of victims of human trafficking. People who:

- Show fear, anxiety, illness and are under nourished
- Suffer injuries that appear to be the result of an assault, such as bruises and scars
- Seem isolated from the local community and are under control of others
- Live in over-crowded conditions, often with heavy security
- Are regularly collected very early and returned late at night
- Have frequent visitors to premises, often a stream of men arriving and leaving at unusual times, or they rarely leave the house without be accompanied
- Are unwilling to engage with others in a social or work setting
- Who are house bound and can only wave for help from a window

Police Scotland should be contacted to report suspicion of human trafficking, 101. Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA) offers support, advocacy and advice to trafficked women. Migrant Help provides support and safe accommodation to migrant workers. Scottish Guardian Service supports trafficked children and young people. ACTS human trafficking group aims to campaign against human trafficking.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37

Through his eyes ('when he saw him...'33). With his heart ('.....he took pity on him.'33). With his feet ('He went to him...'34). With his hands ('...and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.' 34).