

In response to the verdict handed down in the case of Law Wan-tung found guilty of 18 charges against Indonesian domestic worker Erwiana Sulistyaningsih, Aleta Miller, Executive Director of Justice Centre Hong Kong said:

“The severe incidents of assault, abuse and exploitation meted out to Erwiana by her employer, coupled with terrible working conditions, withholding of wages and denial of time off, bear many strong markers of forced labour.

While we welcome the verdict, without any comprehensive legislation explicitly prohibiting human trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, foreign domestic workers will continue to be highly vulnerable to the most severe forms of exploitation. It is regrettable that the Hong Kong Government consistently denies there is a problem with human trafficking here. But many cases strongly suggest otherwise.

Justice Centre Hong Kong is currently undertaking new research into the prevalence of human trafficking, forced labour and other forms of exploitation in Hong Kong amongst foreign domestic workers to establish if these are isolated incidents at the hands of “bad apples” or indeed the “tip of the iceberg” and indicative of something more endemic requiring policy and legislative reform.”

Justice Centre Hong Kong is an NGO that works to protect the rights of refugees and survivors of trafficking. www.justicecentre.org.hk