

Beat: Miscellaneous

Death sentence for Chinese man who held slaves in underground dungeon

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USPA News - A Chinese man was sentenced to death Friday for abducting six young women and holding them as sex slaves in a secret underground dungeon for up to two years. Three of the victims were also convicted of killing two fellow slaves on the man's orders.

Li Hao, a 35-year-old man who worked at the quality supervision bureau in Luoyang, a prefecture-level city in Henan province, was arrested in September 2011 after police rescued four of the victims. The women, aged 16 to 24, were being held in chambers underneath a building in the city. Li, who was married and has a one-year-old son, was convicted by the Luoyang Intermediate People's Court on charges of murder, rape, organized prostitution, illegal detention, and distributing pornography for profit. The former local government employee was sentenced to death on Friday. The shocking case was discovered on September 6, 2011, when one of the women escaped the underground dungeon. The woman told police that Li had briefly let her out of her chamber in order to have sex with other men, as had happened previously when Li was in need of money. It is believed Li spent up to two years digging the two small rooms underneath a basement before abducting the young women, who worked at nightclubs and karaoke bars. His family was not aware of his crimes as the dungeon was located underneath a building away from his home. Li, who also made money off his victims by letting them perform on webcam, kept his victims weak on purpose so they would be unable to flee the chambers or resist his repeated sexual abuse. He allegedly fed them no more than once in every two days, making them physically and mentally weak. In a strange twist, the Chinese court also convicted three of the victims of murder after they killed two of their fellow slaves. It is believed the women are suffering from Stockholm Syndrome, a psychological phenomenon wherein hostages express empathy and have positive feelings towards their captors, sometimes to the point of defending them. One of the sex slaves is said to have been killed by another woman as they fought for the attention of their abductor, and the other died after Li ordered his victims to kill her. The court sentenced one of the victims to three years in prison while the other two were put on probation.

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