

Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney Jackie Lacey Announces Settlement Against Pomona Motel in Human Trafficking Case

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey announced today that a Pomona motel has agreed to take steps to curtail prostitution and human trafficking on its premises, in her office's first use of California's consumer protection laws to confront human sex trafficking in Los Angeles County.

"This settlement makes it more difficult for human traffickers to conduct their illegal enterprises in Los Angeles County," District Attorney Lacey said. "It also serves as a warning to property owners that as we shut down human trafficking operations, we will hold accountable the people who silently gave refuge to these criminals, disregarding their victims and benefitting financially from these crimes."

In the lawsuit, filed July 30, the District Attorney's Office alleged that Pomona Lodge Inc. was a public nuisance, violated California's Red Light Abatement Law and engaged in unlawful business practices.

As part of the settlement, which was signed by Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Christopher K. Lui on Aug. 27, the motel's owner must install security cameras at the motel on Holt Avenue, cease renting rooms by the hour and post the Human Trafficking Awareness notice, as required by law.

The owner also was ordered to pay \$9,000 in civil penalties and investigative costs. The terms of the stipulated judgment go into effect immediately and remain in effect for the next four years.

On Aug. 7, 2018, District Attorney investigators launched an undercover operation at the motel, located in an area known for prostitution and human sex trafficking activity. Pomona police had received numerous complaints about illicit activity at the motel.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorneys Seza Mikikian and Jessie Lee Ann McGrath of the Consumer Protection Division. Prosecutors were assisted by the Pomona Police Department and the city's Code Compliance Unit.

Additionally, Ravirajsihn Zala (dob 7/8/95), a desk clerk at the motel, was charged in case KA119444 with two felony counts each of human trafficking of a minor for a commercial sex act and pimping.

Zala is accused of renting rooms to sex workers and demanding a portion of their earnings from their commercial sex transactions. His trial is slated to begin later this year. If convicted as charged, he faces up to 14 years and eight months in state prison.

District Attorney Lacey has worked toward reducing commercial sex exploitation in Los Angeles County by aggressively prosecuting sex traffickers and providing specialized services to its victims. She created the Human Trafficking Unit in 2014 and the Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Program. The office also distributes posters to businesses, transit providers and hospitals that urge people to call telephone hotlines if they suspect human trafficking activity.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.