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15 years' prison for woman in control of people trafficking in Mexico City

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A year after her arrest, Alejandra Gil Cuervo, popularly known as the "Madam of Sullivan", today received a 15-year prison sentence for the crime of people trafficking.

Until her arrest, Gil Cuervo served as president of the Asociación Civil Pro Apoyo a Servidores (APROASE, A.C.) (Civil Association for the Support of Servers), an organisation that claimed to defend the rights of sex workers and attended human-rights forums.

In 2013, the chair of the anti-trafficking commission of the Senate, Adriana Dávila, invited Gil Cuervo to an expert panel to discuss legislation against people trafficking, which was adopted during the six-year term of Felipe Calderón.

In these discussions, Gil Cuervo expressed her opposition to article 41 of the law and said that working in favour of sex workers would be considered as aiding in people trafficking. "I would like to ask for there to be some awareness in this article, for the work of some organisations to be acknowledged (...) If we didn't show transparency, we wouldn't be standing up for what's right".

This article says, literally:

The penalties provided for the offences under this Title shall also apply to those preparing, promoting, inciting, aiding or collaborating in them.

This law provides penalties from 5 to 25 years of imprisonment for those committing the crime of trafficking, facilitating or promoting it.

After the arrest of the "Madam of Sullivan", senator Adriana Dávila denied having connections to Alejandra Gil, assuring that she never met with her in private and did not take into account her proposals for reform.

In February 2014, Judge No. 19 of criminal matters based in the East Prison issued an arrest warrant for the Gil family, who had been accused by two women of forcing young women to engage in prostitution on the streets of the Cuauhtémoc delegation.

The Gils and other people related to the crime of people trafficking were arrested in an operation where the capital city investigation police rescued about 100 victims in the vicinity of the Cuauhtémoc delegation.

According to an enquiry by the prosecutor's office of the capital city, Alejandra Gil had been in control people trafficking on Sullivan and La Merced for 30 years and was in contact with traffickers from Tlaxcala and Puebla, who co-opted women in that state and took them to the Federal District.