



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

# PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contacts:  
[press@oag.state.md.us](mailto:press@oag.state.md.us)  
410-576-7009

## **Attorney General Brown Announces Guilty Plea of Baltimore Woman for Operating Sex Trafficking Ring Across Maryland** *Human Trafficking Indictment in Washington County Stemmed from Two-Year, Multi-Agency Investigation Led by AG's Organized Crime Unit*

**BALTIMORE, MD (November 22, 2024)** – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the guilty plea of Kenika Danielle Leach, 33, of Baltimore, Maryland, before the Honorable Brett R. Wilson of the Circuit Court for Washington County. Ms. Leach pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, distribution of a controlled dangerous substance—cocaine, and receiving the earnings of a prostitute.

The investigation identified at least 11 women from Hagerstown, Maryland who had been trafficked, by Ms. Leach and her co-conspirators, to hotels and motels throughout Maryland for the purposes of performing commercial sex acts. The charges stemmed from a two-year, multi-agency investigation led by the Attorney General's Organized Crime Unit. In December 2021, the investigation began when the local hospital personnel notified the Baltimore Police Department that a patient had disclosed being sex trafficked by Ms. Leach. More specifically, the victim-survivors told police that Ms. Leach had taken her from Hagerstown to the Baltimore area to commit commercial sex acts, for which Ms. Leach received money and drugs. Soon thereafter, detectives contacted the Attorney General's Organized Crime Unit.

“Individuals who engage in sex trafficking often exploit people struggling with addiction, manipulating them through a destructive cycle of drug use, shame, and abuse,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “In this case, my office secured justice for the victims trapped in this vicious cycle, offering them a path toward healing and the opportunity to reclaim their lives.”

By collaborating with partner agencies, including Homeland Security Investigations and the Maryland State Police, and reviewing large amounts of cell phone, social media, and financial records, the investigative team identified 10 additional women who had been trafficked by Ms. Leach from Hagerstown to hotels in the Baltimore and Anne Arundel County areas for the purpose of performing commercial sex acts.

As alleged in the indictment, Ms. Leach exploited the women's drug addictions by controlling their access to drugs. By giving the victim-survivors drugs, the women became indebted to Ms.

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Leach for “drug debts,” which they were then forced to repay by engaging in commercial sex acts. The money that the victim-survivors earned from these acts would often be paid directly to Ms. Leach through a peer-to-peer payment application.

The indictment also alleges that Ms. Leach used physical violence to coerce and control the women. For example, when Ms. Leach intended to physically assault the women as punishment for disobeying her rules, she would order them to “get on the wall” and cover their faces so that she could batter them without impacting their facial features. Ms. Leach also used intimidation and manipulation to coerce the women to remain obedient and loyal to her.

Ms. Leach will be sentenced by Judge Wilson on February 18, 2025. She remains held without bond pending sentencing. She faces a maximum sentence of 40 years of incarceration.

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked the Criminal Division, particularly Deputy Criminal Division Chief Jared Albert and Assistant Attorney General Surur Fatema Yonce, who are prosecuting this case. Attorney General Brown also thanked Anne Arundel County Police Department Chief Amal E. Awad, Baltimore County Police Department Chief Robert O. McCullough, Washington County Sheriff Brian K. Albert, Hagerstown Chief of Police Paul Kifer, State’s Attorney for Anne Arundel County Anne Colt Leitess, State’s Attorney for Baltimore County Scott Shellenberger, and State’s Attorney for Washington County Gina Cirincion for their assistance with this investigation and prosecution.

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