

REGRETS ROT THE HEART

My name is Muchaneta ('you will eventually tire') I come from Zimbabwe. I came to S.A (South Africa) to look for work, but found things very difficult, so I decided its best I become a prostitute. It is very difficult to look for work in a foreign country especially when your papers are not in order and really, nothing comes to those who just sit. I have been working for two years now as a prostitute while staying at a hotel in Johannesburg.

While working this job, I met a certain man in the hotel where I reside, as there is a bar on its ground floor. This man told me he wanted to take me home with him and so having agreed to his proposition, he then left money for me where I reside. So we went together where he lives, without him telling me he lived there with many other men. I was to find out the hard way as all six men then slept with me without putting on condoms. I cried helplessly as I had nowhere to go and report. I was afraid to go to the police for fear of being returned home as my papers are not in order. In addition, sometimes going to the police when you are a prostitute they do not listen to you and instead say 'she who goes looking for scars will get them, you got what you were looking for.'

This being the case, the following day I went to the hospital whereupon I was examined by some doctors who confirmed that I did not have H.I.V in my blood. As prostitutes, we experience a lot of things especially when male customers ask and you tell them (that you are a foreigner), they then treat you like a slave. So one really has to be very brave or else die of hunger.

All we are asking for are better means of survival in this foreign land and recognition that we are human as everyone else and not wild animals. We went to school and passed our examinations and it is only the scarcity of jobs that has led us to prostitution. We are therefore appealing that government kindly put in place laws that prohibit the police from treating us like slaves and instead help us in times of trouble. Moreover it (the government) should provide prostitutes with a designated place to work (ply their trade) and also put in place a law that protects prostitutes.