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Seven Arrested for Sex Trafficking Ring in Rochester

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Rochester, N.Y. (WROC)- It took the feds nine months, but they say they finally broke up a sex trafficking ring that was run out of Rochester.

Investigators call human trafficking a form of modern day slavery.

"It's like being raped repeatedly, in some cases as many as ten times a day," said U.S. Attorney William Hochul.

That's just what happened to 9 victims in our area. Seven of them minors as young as 14-years-old.

"The defendants lured these victims by promises of money, in some cases promises of drugs, and in other instances threats and actual incidents of violence," said Hochul.

On Thursday, seven people in Rochester face charges after investigators broke up a state-wide human trafficking ring. Investigators say some of the victims were contacted through social media. Meantime, one defendant waited outside of women shelters and the Department of Social Services for young girls.

Prosecutors say the accused exploiters lived with the victims in different hotels and houses.

"The tactics include violence, or the threat of violence, the use of drugs or alcohol, or in some cases tricking the victim into believing that they are in a relationship with their exploiters," said James Spero, Special Agent in Charge of HSI Buffalo.

The Center for Youth helps local sex trafficking victims as well as identifying red flags.

"They are unexcused absences, secrecy, truancy, changes in behavior, medical problems, other kind of harmful behaviors, high risks behaviors," said Elaine Spaul, Executive Director of Center for Youth.

As for this human trafficking ring, U.S. Attorney Hochul says the defendants posted daily advertisements using fake photos of the victims on backpage.com myprovider.com.

Investigators say the victims were taken from the Rochester area to other areas of New York and even New Jersey.

The defendants are both men and women in their 20s and mid 30s. If convicted, they face a minimum of 10 years in prison for each victim.

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