

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hudson County Woman Sentenced to 70 Months in Prison for Enslaving Sri Lankan Woman for Over Nine Years

A Hudson County, New Jersey, woman was sentenced today to 70 months of prison for her conviction on charges of forced labor, alien harboring for financial gain, and marriage fraud, the Department of Justice announced.

Alia Imad Faleh Al Hunaity, aka “Alia Al Qaternah,” 44, was found guilty in May 2019 on all counts of the indictment against her following a six-day trial before U.S. District Judge Robert B. Kugler, who imposed the sentence today in Camden federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and the evidence at trial:

Hunaity brought the victim, a Sri Lankan national, to the United States on a temporary visa in 2009 to perform domestic work. Hunaity caused the victim to overstay her visa and remain in the United States illegally for over nine years. Hunaity forced the victim to cook and clean her homes in Woodland Park and Secaucus, New Jersey, and to care for her three children, all without pay. She limited the victim’s interactions with the world outside of Hunaity’s homes. During this time, Hunaity required the victim to sleep on a bed in a public space in Hunaity’s homes, including in the kitchen. In 2018, Hunaity forced the victim to marry her so that the victim could obtain legal residence and Hunaity could continue to force her to work without fear of the victim being deported.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Kugler sentenced Al Hunaity to three years of supervised release.

U.S. Attorney Carpenito and Assistant Attorney General Dreiband credited special agents of U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, Newark Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Brian Michael, and special agents of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, New York Region, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael C. Mikulka, with the investigation leading to today’s sentencing.

This case was prosecuted in conjunction with the interagency Anti-Trafficking Coordination Team initiative of the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security and Labor. ACTeams focus on developing high-impact human trafficking investigations and prosecutions involving forced labor, international sex trafficking and sex trafficking by force, fraud or coercion through interagency collaboration among federal prosecutors and federal investigative agencies.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Macurdy and Trial Attorney Kate Hill of the Civil Rights Division’s Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

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