

11 arrested in connection with rape of minors

Police in central China's Henan province have arrested 11 people on suspicion of involvement in the raping of minors.

According to a statement issued on Sunday by the Police Bureau of Kaifeng, Henan, a couple in Weishi county organized schoolgirls and forced them to have sex with two businessmen, both in their 40s.

The two businessmen were charged with rape. The couple and another two people were charged with organizing prostitution, which is punishable with sentences between five years and life in prison.

Another five people who took part in organizing the prostitution activities were detained.

The statement said police authorities at city and provincial levels arrived at Weishi county, which is under the jurisdiction of Kaifeng, a city known for being the capital for several dynasties in ancient China.

Police will thoroughly review the case, bring every criminal involved to justice and clamp down on crimes against minors, the statement said.

The news caught wide public attention after a Wechat post went viral, saying more than 30 middle school students in Weishi county were forced into prostitution.

Parents of the victims were shocked by the online post, which included the names and identification card numbers of their children, according to a news report from the Mirror, a Beijing newspaper.

The parents feared that the leak of personal information would bring the trauma of victimization to their children and asked police to help delete the information on the internet.

The report said the parents did not learn how their children's personal information was leaked.

The case was uncovered when a victim told her aunt about what she went through and the aunt reported the case to police in February.

A mother of another victim told the Mirror that her girl said she was taken to a hotel room and was given 300 yuan (\$44) after sex. The girl refused to accept the money.

Li Wei, a lawyer specializing in criminal law at Jie Qiang Law Firm in Beijing, said those who are convicted of raping multiple women or raping a minor who is under 14 face a severe penalty, which is normally between 10 years and life in prison, or even the death penalty if the rape resulted in

severe harm, such as causing the death of a victim.

According to statistics from the Supreme People's Court, the number of child molestation cases has risen in recent years. In 2012, 2,017 such cases were closed in courts across the country. The number rose to 2,828 in 2014.

The number of child sexual abuse cases filed in 2015 in the juvenile court of Beijing Second Intermediate People's Court increased by 50 percent year-on-year.