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Organization seeks to end human trafficking

A Thai government official met Thursday with local nonprofit organizations to learn how the U.S. is combating the problem.

By [Riham Feshir](#)

One night, Elsa Batica answered a frantic phone call from a woman who whispered, "I need to get out of here."

Sexually and physically abused by her husband and other men, the caller, a new immigrant from the Philippines, didn't know who to ask for help. She was randomly flipping through the phone book trying to see if she could recognize a Filipino name.

She found Batica, who is the founding member the Filipino American Women's Network Minnesota chapter, an organization that provides support for trafficked women and helps them escape from abusive partners.

As a part of the International Visitor Leadership Program, the Minnesota International Center invited Thai government official Ranee Wongprajuablap, who met Thursday with Batica's FAWN and other local nonprofit organizations, to learn from the ways the United States is combating the problem of human trafficking.

The United Nations defines human trafficking as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force."

Trafficked women are promised a better life in the United States, but in reality they're being sexually exploited, Batica said.

In addition to meeting with FAWN during her Thursday visit, Wongprajuablap also met with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the Civil Society in Minnesota.

She said she would like to see the cooperation between nongovernmental organizations and the federal government applied to Thailand.

According to humantrafficking.org, through which organizations come together to combat human trafficking, Thailand is a destination country for those trafficked from Cambodia, Laos, China, Russia and Uzbekistan for sexual and labor exploitation.

Wongprajuablap said she hopes Thailand and neighboring countries will work together to solve the human trafficking problem.