

much ay. He freely id dis-," said one of bid to prove his growing influence to those opposed to him. Mr Ojaamong, an ODM governor and close ally of Mr Odinga, was quoted saying he would support the DP in 2022.

plus Sh230,000 as allowances. The lowest paid medical, dental of ficers and pharmacists were to earn a maximum of Sh68,000 as basic salary.

Human trafficking probe: CS on the spot as Pakistanis kept in safe house

BY RICHARD MUNGUTI

A magistrate has ordered eight girls from Pakistan flown into the country as cultural dancers be kept in a safe house to enable police establish whether they are victims of human trafficking.

Senior Principal Magistrate Kennedy Cheruiyot sitting at Milimani law courts gave the order after being furnished with special permits issued to the eight foreign girls by Culture Cabinet Secretary Rashid Echesa.

Defence lawyer Evans Ondieki told Mr Cheruiyot that the eight girls, who were arrested at Balle Balle Club at Parklands, "are in the country legally with full permission of CS Echesa."

Mr Ondieki said the cultural dancers were allowed to enter into the country by Mr Echesa to promote trans-national cultures.

The lawyer pleaded with the magistrate to release the girls to be detained in a safe house where police can access them whenever they want as they investigate the owner of Balle Balle Club, who flew them into Kenya.

"On humanitarian grounds, I urge this court to release these girls as they have not bathed for the last one week, health rules require women to fresh up and bath as many times as they can afford," Mr Ondieki told the magistrate.



Sports CS Rashid Echesa.

He said it was regretful that police are stifling Mr Echesa's order that allowed the girls to perform in Kenya up to January 18, 2019.

He said each of the girls paid the Immigration Department Sh45,000 to be issued with the special passes.

"What government are the police serving and what government is Mr Echesa serving. Aren't they serving the same

45,000

The amount that each of the girls is said to have paid the Immigration Department to be issued with special passes.

regime?" Mr Ondieki wondered.

He prevailed upon the court to release the girls to Mr Nadeem Khan of Blue Heart, a non-governmental organisation against Human trafficking, Violence and Child Abuse, to place them in a safe house where "only him and police can access them for interrogation."

Court appearance

Although their release had been opposed vehemently by State prosecutor Annette Wangia, the magistrate released the girls, who are suspected to be victims of human trafficking, to Mr Khan on humanitarian grounds with orders that only police from the trans-national crimes desk can access them.

The magistrate directed them to appear in court on January 8, 2019 when the proprietor of Bella Bella Club, Mr Safendra Kumar Sonwani, and his manager Mr Mika Osichiro will be arraigned for prosecution of human trafficking.

Mr Sonwani and Mr Osichiro were detained on Monday for interrogation for "irregularly trafficking into the country the said eight girls".

Mr Ondieki has asked the court to disregard police fears, saying CS Echesa has allowed cultural promotions, which is permitted in the Constitution.