THE COPTHORNE CASE

In 2000, four female employees of the Copthorne Orchid Hotel in Penang filed complaints with the hotel and made police reports against their former General Manager, a German national, for various incidents where he had verbally and physically harassed them as well as two other female employees of the hotel. The employees were dismissed by the hotel after

these complaints were made.

The General Manager was charged in the Magistrate's Court for outraging the modesty of three of these employees. However, he left the country before the criminal proceedings were over and has not returned since. Although the court issued a warrant of arrest against him, the warrant could not be executed, resulting in a verdict of discharge not amounting to acquittal by the court. To-date, he has not been brought back to Malaysia to answer the charges and the criminal cases remain unresolved as such.

Alongside the criminal charges, the four women had sought redress from the Industrial Court for wrongful dismissal by the hotel.



GEORGE TOWN: After soon strendle years and enduring vicious goosts, four farmer employees of a hotel hore could finally rejoice after they

Rossie Lim, Sit, Fiona Chair St, and been obtene who can be caused to the known to Koat St, and Ger. 29, terre associated to the known to Koat St, and Ger. 29, terre associated to the Chairman MCDBH 462 to have supported to the control of the success of the suc

Then though there were four of ex. it was tough. Image too if it was only one remain She said they had to endure those greety after they flaimed that they were somely laterassed by the ther captionne Orded greens

Some of their colleagues did not dare to befriend them for loor of losing their jobs while store.

"Air over company directors did not believe our claimned accused us of being roublemakers and making up stories," site said, adding the there were others translered for their wires others translered for their did not dare to come for

The services of the finar were terminated in April 2000. At that time, Um was the human resource executive t the hotel, Choo was an inman resource assistant, Kouh one the manager of the Calone restaurant while this was nescrotive secretary.

Lim said they knocked on the deers of every authority they could think of in help light their case.

were a tracematic period for her familie. Afteroph she is now working for a new company. Case is reductant to discuss the case.

As for Keath, the transmatic spisode is still fresh in her mind, She broke down when recalling it.

Kosh said it tick her six months to go; another job, and when she did find one, she had difficulty keeping it. "I have gone through these ise already. It was so difficult ages a job as I did not dans rered the case for four my new supplyor results not want to ire me," she sobbed.

Oct also had difficulty finding a job and claimed that she could no longer work in the hotelinthistry.

All four were released when the industrial overs ruled in their favour as a proved that they were telling the much all along and were not troublemakers.

Western's Center for Change, Penang, (WCL) executive director Lob Chang Kool sole is was important for computies to their qualifolium to proted women from sexual turriasment.

After a seven-year struggle, on 30 October 2007, the Industrial Court finally ruled in favour of these four former employees of the hotel and awarded them a total of RM308,642 in back wages and compensation in lieu of reinstatement (read the <u>Judgment of the Industrial</u> Court (848KBPDF) which also contains detailed facts of the case).

These women's courage and persistence in standing up for their rights and beliefs were rightly acknowledged by the Industrial Court.

Sadly, in the vast majority of cases, many victims of sexual harassment feel that they have no option but to suffer in silence. The government's lukewarm response to the issue has been a major hindrance to the effective resolution of sexual harassment cases in the country.

JAG is pushing for the issue to be taken seriously, and for the government and employers to take steps towards enacting effective legislation against sexual harassment at the workplace.