

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

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EBay halts alleged sale of three girls

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SAN JOSE, Calif. -- EBay halted an auction this week and suspended a Taiwanese user who allegedly tried to sell three Vietnamese girls on the Internet site for a starting bid of \$5,400.

The auction, which began March 2 on eBay's Taiwan site, did not include a detailed description of the goods for sale but said the "items" were from Vietnam and would be "shipped to Taiwan only."

The site included five photos of three people. One dark-haired woman in a white shirt wore makeup and blue nail polish, and the other two appeared to be girls no older than their early teens. The 10-day auction had a starting price of 180,000 Taiwanese dollars, or \$5,411.

Vietnamese activists groups in Australia and the United States noticed the listing as early as March 5 and began sending e-mails to women's rights and immigrant advocates around the world. Many of them contacted eBay, and earlier this week customer service representatives pulled the auction.

"There couldn't be a clearer case of what's not allowed on eBay," spokesman Hani Durzy said Friday.

San Jose-based eBay strictly forbids the sale or purchase of humans, alive or dead.

The auction company turned over information on the seller to Taiwanese authorities, Durzy said. He would not release any more information on the user, identified on the site as "mmm0052g" and an eBay member since March 1.

On the Net:

eBay: <http://www.ebay.com>