

EBay acts over human trafficking

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By Lisa Baertlein

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Online marketplace eBay says it has removed from its Web site a listing that offered three young Vietnamese women for auction and will report the person who posted it to local authorities.

The listing, which said the women were for shipment only to Taiwan, "was an egregious violation of not only eBay policies but also the law," eBay spokesman Hani Durzy told Reuters on Friday.

"It was pulled as soon as we were aware of it. Anything illegal is against our policies. There is absolutely no room for human trafficking" on the site, said Durzy.

EBay also has suspended the poster, who originally listed the women for auction on eBay Taiwan, he said.

Durzy said he was not certain of the dates the posting appeared on eBay, which is a popular venue for bidding on and shopping for myriad items -- from cars to collectibles.

A screenshot of the listing provided by the National Congress of Vietnamese Americans showed that it was first posted on March 2.

Hung Nguyen, the group's president, said advocacy groups wrote to eBay demanding that the item be pulled down when it came to their attention on March 5.

Such activities "really concern us," said Nguyen, who commended eBay for its quick response.

EBay, along with its community of users, keeps a constant watch on listings and reports cases of illegal activities to law enforcement.

The U.S. State Department has said Taiwan is a source, transit and destination point for people trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Victims often are trafficked to Taiwan from China, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines.

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