

Police yesterday helped more than 60 Burmese workers from a garment factory in Bangkok whose owners detained them and forced them to work 16 hours a day for paltry wages.

Their raid came after one worker escaped from the factory operated by Chinese national Da Long Wu, 50, and his wife Namee Sae Lee, 26 - at Soi Tap Suwan on Asok-Din Daeng road.

The victim, whose name was not revealed, lodged allegations of unfair treatment, saying staff at the crowded factory had to work indoors from 8am until midnight, with doors and windows locked firmly to prevent them leaving.

Police said the complainant told them he was paid 200 baht a month instead of the 7,000 baht he had been promised.

The officers arrested Mr Da and Ms Namee on suspicion of breaching the Labour Act.

The suspects denied the allegation. Ms Namee said the workers had to work at a reduced salary initially to repay recruitment debts of 15,000 baht each. However, she admitted to detaining the workers inside the factory to prevent their escape.

Previously, she told police, her factory followed legal requirements to register foreign workers, but many of them left without notice when they found themselves new jobs.

In another development, the Stateless Watch for Research and Development Institute of Thailand (SWIT) said it had been contacted by Saman Sataweesook, who was born to Lao refugees in Ubon Ratchathani's Khong Chiam district, after he was arrested on April 16 on charges of illegal entry to Thailand.

The institute's legal expert, Daruni Paisalpanitkul, argued police should not have arrested Mr

Saman because he had the right to live in the country.

Mr Saman, currently detained by the Immigration Bureau, had been previously arrested late last year by Klong Toey police on the same charge, but was later released after the institute clarified his status to the officers.

From: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/232721/burmese-allege-slave-labour>