

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Lauren Carter, Communications Manager
(864) 608-5085 | lcarter@mauldincitysc.com



Mauldin Police Department Arrests 6 in Connection with Human Trafficking Operation at Illicit Massage Businesses

MAULDIN, S.C. — The Mauldin Police Department has arrested six individuals in connection with a human trafficking operation involving illicit massage businesses within the city. Five arrests were made last week, and one arrest was made yesterday.

On Wednesday, Sept. 23, MPD conducted a joint operation with the Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Simpsonville Police Department and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) to serve search warrants at six locations and apprehend five suspects.

The following suspects were arrested last Wednesday, with the charges listed below each individual:

- Anna Zhao, 41, of Mauldin – owner of Tokyo Spa at 16 W. Pointe Blvd in Mauldin and Minami Massage at 314 W. Georgia Rd in Simpsonville
 - Trafficking in Persons
 - Prostitution
- Christopher Michael Morphy, 42, of Simpsonville – associate of Zhao's
 - Trafficking in Persons
 - Prostitution
- Lianying Cai, 51, of Simpsonville – co-owner of Ocean Breeze Massage (formerly U Relax Massage) at 304a N Main St in Mauldin
 - Prostitution
- Honglian He, 55, of Simpsonville – co-owner of Ocean Breeze Massage (formerly U Relax Massage) at 304a N Main St in Mauldin
 - Prostitution
- Yuelian Gu, 55, of Simpsonville
 - Prostitution

All five suspects were taken to the Greenville County Detention Center (GCDC).

On Tuesday, Sept. 29, MPD arrested Jufen Tang, 53, of Greenville, co-owner at Ocean Breeze Massage (formerly U Relax Massage), and charged her with prostitution. She was also taken to GCDC.

Investigators describe this case as a multi-jurisdictional operation involving months of surveillance and ongoing collaboration with the Greenville County Sheriff's Office.

"Investigators have worked diligently to uncover the circumstances surrounding these businesses and build a case, and our collaboration with the Greenville County Sheriff's Office has been instrumental in bringing the investigation to this point," said Lt. Kevin Cox, Investigations Supervisor. "Our ultimate goal is to protect the victims of this operation and ensure those responsible are held accountable for their actions."

In April of 2025, the Mauldin Police Department first received a report of an individual being assaulted at U Relax Massage at 304a N Main St in Mauldin. Later that month, MPD sent an undercover officer into the business to receive a massage; the officer was assaulted during the massage, and the employee was arrested and charged with prostitution.

In June of 2026, MPD received a tip about an illicit massage business operating at Tokyo Spa in Mauldin and began an investigation. It was discovered that employees of Tokyo Spa, Ocean Breeze Massage (formerly U Relax Massage) and Minami Massage — who were not licensed massage therapists — were being paid less than minimum wage and forced to live inside the massage parlors with limited ability to leave.

During the investigation, MPD made contact with the Greenville County Sheriff's Office and shared information about their related cases, leading to the joint operation on Sept. 23 to arrest five suspects.

"These arrests reflect our commitment to protecting vulnerable members of our community and holding those who exploit others accountable," said Chief George Miller. "Human trafficking is a serious crime, and we will continue to dedicate the resources necessary to investigate those responsible and bring them to justice. I'm proud of the work done by our investigators to shed light on this operation, and I'm thankful to our partner agencies for their assistance throughout the process."

This investigation remains ongoing. Anyone with information related to this case is asked to contact Lt. Cox at (864) 289-8980 or kcox@mauldinpolice.com.

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