

SLS Hotel to Pay \$2.5 Million To Settle EEOC Race, Color, National Origin Lawsuit

Hotel Fired Employees Based on Race, Color, and National Origin, Federal Agency Charged

MIAMI - The SLS Hotel, operated by hotel, restaurant and nightlife company called "sbe", will pay \$2.5 million and provide other relief to settle the discrimination lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, black Haitian dishwashers were wrongfully terminated on the basis of their race, color, and national origin and were replaced by a staffing agency workforce of mostly light-skinned Hispanics. The terminated dishwashers worked in the kitchens of The Bazaar by José Andrés, Katsuya, and the Hyde Beach-all restaurant venues located at SLS Hotel, in South Beach.

The dishwashers testified that their supervising chefs referred to them as "slaves" and reprimanded them for speaking Creole, even amongst themselves, while Hispanic employees were allowed to speak Spanish.

The testimony also revealed that the black Haitian dishwashers complained to human resources about discrimination and about having a "racist" supervisor but, instead of addressing these complaints, the SLS Hotel fired the entire dishwashing department made up primarily of black Haitians, without providing them an opportunity to apply to the staffing agency before their termination.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and/or national origin. The EEOC filed suit against SLS Hotel South Beach (Case No.1:17-cv-21446) in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, Miami Division after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

The \$2.5 million settlement amount will be awarded to 17 black Haitian dishwashers, 15 of which are represented by The Alderman Firm. The SLS Hotel also agreed to provide equitable relief over a three-year period that includes comprehensive training for human resources officials, management personnel, and hourly employees across six of sbe's South Florida hotels: SLS Hotel South Beach, Shore Club, SLS Brickell, Delano, The Raleigh, and SLS Lux Miami. Further, an independent consent decree monitor will attend all required training sessions and provide comprehensive reports to the EEOC. The EEOC will also receive comprehensive data on any terminations, layoffs, or involuntary separations that may occur over the three-year period across the six sbe hotels in the Miami region.

The EEOC Miami District Office Regional Attorney Robert E. Weisberg said, "Employers cannot use outsourcing as a proxy for discriminatory practices. The EEOC will continue to fight to prevent these discriminatory employment practices, especially against vulnerable workers."

Michael Farrell, district director for the EEOC's Miami District Office, added, "EEOC will continue to protect workers in the hospitality industry, including the black Haitian community that makes up a significant part of the South Florida workforce."

The EEOC's Miami District Office has investigators who speak English, Spanish, and Creole and processes discrimination charges, administrative enforcement and conducting agency litigation in Florida, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov. Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [email updates](#).