

Immigration Department smashes syndicate making false instruments (with photo)

The Anti-Illegal Migration Agency of the Immigration Department (ImmD) smashed a syndicate using false instruments to apply for foreign domestic helper (FDH) working visas today (July 25). ImmD officers raided a flat on Temple Street in Yau Ma Tei. During the surprise raid, two male active core members of the syndicate were arrested. They were, respectively, a Hong Kong resident aged 67 and a Filipino recognizance form holder aged 40. Upon a search, computer equipment and a considerable number of false instruments were seized, including FDH working visa application forms, false salary and residential proof. The computer equipment was believed to be used for making false instruments.

During a previous investigation into a case relating to overstaying ex-FDHs who were taking up unapproved employment in Hong Kong, the ImmD detected several suspicious cases of ex-FDHs using forged FDH contracts to stay in Hong Kong and work illegally. After months of in-depth investigation and intelligence analysis, a syndicate was identified as having arranged foreign nationals to work in Hong Kong illegally through the use of false FDH contracts.

In May 2023, the ImmD triggered the enforcement action. Over 50 persons, including employers listed on forged FDH contracts, Filipinos, Indonesians and Indians who had applied for the FDH visas using false contracts, aged 27 to 67, were apprehended. The syndicate arranged false employers and made false instruments, including false salary and residential proof, to dishonestly obtain FDH working visas from the ImmD. More suspects could be arrested as the investigation is continuing.

"It is an offence to make, possess or use false instruments or copies of false instruments. Upon conviction, offenders are liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. In addition, it is an offence to make false representation to an immigration officer. Offenders are liable to prosecution and to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years. Furthermore, anyone who commits the offence of conspiracy to defraud is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman also stressed that FDHs should only take up employment as a domestic helper as approved by the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for two years. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution.

