

News story: Fake ID gang jailed

The criminal organisation was dismantled following an operation led by Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) Team.

From late 2015 until June 2017, officers gathered evidence which ultimately led to the conviction of 7 conspirators from Coventry, Nottingham, Redditch and London.

Over the course of their investigation, officers unearthed wide-scale distribution of British passports, British residence permits, degree certificates and Constructions Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards – all of them fake. Prices ranged from £900 for a passport to £200 for the CSCS card and degree certificate.

The gang was led by Steven Kanaventi, 39, of Mulliner Street, Coventry, and Alfred Adekoya, 47, of Kingslake Street, London. They were jailed at Woolwich Crown Court today (26 January) and each sentenced to 3 years 4 months and 2 weeks imprisonment having pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture a fake document at an earlier hearing.

Inspector Ben Thomas from CFI said:

The criminal business that Kanaventi and Adekoya were running was designed to undermine the fundamental immigration rule that if you have no legal status in the UK, you have no right to work. Their customers hoped that the fake documents would be enough to convince prospective employers that they were entitled to work, in turn allowing them to build a life for themselves in the UK to which they were simply not entitled.

By bringing Kanaventi, Adekoya and their associates to justice we have stopped a concerted, systematic and financially motivated assault on the UK's immigration system.

Adekoya was arrested on 20 June last year after making an exchange inside a betting shop in Woolwich with a man subsequently identified as Luke Nkanta, 29. When Adekoya was stopped and searched shortly after the transaction had been made he was found in possession of 3 counterfeit British passports.

When Nkanta, of Wordsworth House, Woolwich, was stopped he was found with an envelope containing a counterfeit British passport.

Also arrested on 20 June was Abdul Azeeza, 57. When officers raided his home address in Missenden, Inville Road, they found him in possession of a fake residence permit, a fake passport as well as some of the paraphernalia – including specially adapted tools for dismantling passports, threads for stitching, paint thinners and laminating equipment – used in the manufacture of fake ID documents. He also had numerous orders for fake documents, some on

his phone and some completed on betting slips.

Kanaventi was arrested at his home address just over a week later on 28 June. Arrested on the same day, each at their home addresses, were 3 accomplices:

- Paul Kanaventi, 37, of Forster Street, Nottingham
- Victor Ariyo, 53, of Rye Hill Park, London
- Madalitso Majawa, 33, of Ombersley Close, Redditch

Ben Thomas said:

Steven Kanaventi was a particularly brazen operator, to the extent that his social media alias – Chris Namatchanga – was a clear play on words of ‘name changer’.

Kanaventi was involved in every part of the Midlands operation. He set the prices, he placed the orders with his forger Ariyo and he was even caught on CCTV posting the counterfeit documents to his customers.

Like Adekoya and Steven Kanaventi, Ariyo, Azeeza, Paul Kanaventi, Nkanta and Majawa had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing. Ariyo admitted conspiracy to manufacture a fake document and money laundering. Azeeza admitted possessing fake documents and possessing equipment with the intention of making fake documents. Paul Kanaventi admitted money laundering. Nkanta and Majawa both admitted to possessing fake ID documents with improper intention.

The full breakdown of the sentences passed today at Woolwich Crown Court are:

- Steven Kanaventi – 3 years 4 months and 2 weeks
- Adekoya – 3 years 4 months and 2 weeks
- Paul Kanaventi – 9 months
- Azeeza – 4 years
- Ariyo – 3 years
- Nkanta – 1 year 4 months
- Majawa – 6 months

CFI will now pursue the confiscation of £135,000 of cash under the Proceeds of Crime Act which was sitting in a bank account belonging to Ariyo.