

Telecom fraudsters sentenced in student death case



The principal criminal, Chen Wenhui, was sentenced to life in prison on charges of fraud and illegally obtaining personal information at the Linyi Intermediate People's Court. [Photo/Weibo.com]

Seven people involved in a high-profile telecom fraud case that led to the death of a university candidate were sentenced to prison at a court in Shandong Province on Wednesday.

The principal criminal, Chen Wenhui, was sentenced to life in prison on charges of fraud and illegally obtaining personal information at the Linyi Intermediate People's Court. The other six criminals were sentenced to prison between three to 15 years.

The seven people cheated people out of money by posing as officers of educational, financial and real estate institutions in telephone calls made between November 2015 and August 2016.

One of the victims, Xu Yuyu, an 18-year-old student from Linyi, was called on Aug 19. She had applied for financial aid from a local educational authority two days before she received the phone call.

During the call, Zheng Xiancong, one of the criminals, told Xu that he was an educational authority officer and would provide her with about 2,600 yuan (US\$385) in student aid. Zheng asked her to contact the local financial authority to find out how to receive the aid.

Xu was given a number to call that connected her to Chen. Chen said he asked Xu to transfer 9,900 yuan in tuition fees into a bank account, adding that the student aid would appear in her student account.

After discovering the money was stolen, Xu and her father reported the theft to local police on the same evening. On her way back home, she died of cardiac arrest. Forensic experts said Xu's death was linked to the great anxiety caused by the telecom fraud.

Chen Wenhui said he obtained more than 10,000 pieces of personal information, including that of Xu, through QQ, an instant messaging tool.