

Employment agent of foreign domestic helpers jailed for conspiracy to defraud

An employment agent of foreign domestic helpers (the employment agent) was convicted of two counts of conspiracy to defraud and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment today (September 24) at the Shatin Magistrates' Courts. Twenty-three foreign domestic helpers involved in the case had been convicted earlier for the offence of making false representation to an immigration officer, and were sentenced to up to eight months' imprisonment.

The employment agent is a 56-year-old Hong Kong permanent resident. Since April 2018, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has processed several foreign domestic helper (FDH) visa applications through the same employment agent. After in-depth and thorough comparisons, the ImmD detected several suspicious employers' residential and financial proofs and triggered the investigation of the employment agent. In July 2018, ImmD investigators mounted a series of operations. Twenty-four persons, comprising the employment agent and 23 foreigners who had applied for FDH visas using false contracts, were apprehended. During the enforcement action, two computers and four mobile phones were seized, and respective false employers' proofs were discovered after conducting forensic examinations.

An investigation of the other suspects is continuing.

"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. In addition, anyone who commits the offence of conspiracy to defraud is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years. Furthermore, it is an offence to make, possess or use false instruments. Upon conviction, offenders are liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment," an ImmD spokesman said.