



NEWS RELEASE
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POEA suspends agency for collecting placement fees from recruits for Canada

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration suspended the license of a recruitment agency found collecting placement fees from applicants for jobs in Canada.

Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said the POEA *motu proprio* initiated complaints against September Star, Inc. for illegal collection of fees. The POEA also initiated charges against JFG Career Agency, September Star's counterpart in Canada, for default in its contractual obligations to the Filipino workers, and for gross violation of laws, rules and regulations on overseas employment.

The case stemmed from a written complaint of Mr. Tyson J. Kefebre, owner of four branches of A&W restaurants in Canada who hired 16 Filipino workers from the Philippines through September Star. Mr. Kefebre learned from his Filipino staff that they each paid US\$1,500.00 to the agency and were compelled to sign promissory notes that they would pay additional US\$4,500.00 to September Star in scheduled installments.

Kefebre also reported that one of his Filipino workers paid JFG Career Agency US\$2,000.00 for the release of her travel documents. The Canadian agency also asked the worker to sign another employment contract with very onerous terms that were contrary to the terms in the contract approved by the Canadian government. Baldoz said police authorities in Alberta filed cases of extortion and violation of Fair Trading Act against JFG Career Agency.

Baldoz said JFG Career Agency also collected very high placement fees from Filipino workers it recruited directly from United Arab Emirates.

In Canada, collection of recruitment fees from employees is a criminal offense punishable by a minimum fine of \$100,000.00 or imprisonment or both.

The POEA has recently issued a memorandum circular prohibiting Philippine licensed agencies from collecting placement fees from workers bound to the Canada provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. ###