

News Advisory
3 September 2014

POEA suspends recruitment agency, New Zealand employer

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has ordered the preventive suspension of Sacred Heart International Services, Inc. and its foreign principal and direct employer in New Zealand.

Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac said that based on a letter endorsed by the Philippine Embassy in Wellington, New Zealand, the POEA has *motu proprio* initiated complaint for recruitment violation against Sacred Heart International, and disciplinary action cases against Business Immigration and Valiant Homes Limited, the counterpart placement agency and employer in New Zealand respectively.

Cacdac said eight (8) Filipinos construction workers employed by Valiant Homes Limited in Auckland, NZ alleged that each of them paid Sacred Heart International Php330,000 but the receipt issued to them was for Php120,000 only. The workers claimed the agency endorsed them to lending companies that charged them high interest rates, their total loan ballooned to half million pesos.

Based on the approved contracts, the workers were to receive a salary of 20 New Zealand dollars per hour or a weekly salary of 800 NZ dollars computed at 40 work hours per week. The salary offered was approximately Php30,000 per week or Php120,000 a month calculated at the prevailing exchange rate on the dates of their deployment.

In the jobsite, the workers alleged that their actual salaries on their respective pay slips did not match with the time sheets they submitted to the company, indicating short payment of amounts equivalent to three to four hours of work or 60 to 80 NZ dollars per week.

The Filipino workers also claimed the company deducted ND\$30 from their salary supposedly for service fee, and they were forced to work on Saturdays under the threat of being sent back to the Philippines.

Cacdac said the order of preventive suspension issued against Sacred Heart International shall bar the agency from deploying overseas Filipino workers pending resolution of recruitment violation cases, including illegal exaction of placement fee, filed against it.

Business Immigration and Valiant Homes, Inc. meanwhile cannot hire OFWs from the Philippines until further ordered by the POEA. /END