

News Release  
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## DOJ okays illegal recruitment charge vs owner of training center, foreign consultant

The Department of Justice's National Prosecution Service has approved the filing of cases of illegal recruitment against Marie Joy Bautista Valdriz, owner of Kiwi Assessment and Training Center in Angeles City and Philip Cooper, a skills competency assessor from New Zealand.

Administrator Hans Leo Cacdac said DOJ Prosecutor General Claro Arellano approved the recommendation of Assistant State Prosecutor Antonio A. Arquiza, Jr to file a criminal case against Valdriz and Cooper.

The POEA initiated the filing of the case after it received information that Kiwi Assess was advertising in its Facebook page job vacancies in New Zealand without the proper license or authority to recruit workers for overseas employment. In November 2014, Administrator Cacdac ordered POEA operatives to conduct surveillance operation which resulted in a closure order upon verification that Kiwi Assess was indeed engaged in illegal recruitment activities.

Valdriz admitted she is the owner of Kiwi Assess while Cooper declared he is a competency assessor who trains, teaches, and prepares the technical proficiency and competence of skilled workers within international standards. They both denied having committed any form of illegal recruitment in the course of operation of the center. According to them, Kiwi is not a recruitment agency, but a skills assessment and training center that operates in the same manner as TESDA or any private skills and training center.

Assistant Prosecutor Arquiza, however, believed otherwise.

"Following a careful evaluation of the evidence on record, we find sufficient evidence to indict respondents Marie Joy Bautista Valdriz and Philip Cooper of illegal recruitment. There is ample evidence to show that respondents Valdriz and Cooper are engaged in the recruitment of workers for deployment in New Zealand. Annex "B" of the complaint-affidavit which is the Facebook advertisement of Kiwi clearly and unequivocally reveals that they are offering overseas jobs to the public", Arquiza wrote in the Resolution.

The prosecutor, however, dismissed the case against respondent Jennifer Tolentino, an employee of Kiwi Assess.

"... (W)e find merit in the allegation of respondent Jennifer Tolentino that she is unaware of the illegal activities of her office. As a matter of fact, as a mere contractual front desk staff, she is

not part of management. Whether or not the Office she is working with possesses the necessary recruitment license is not within her responsibility. Such responsibility belongs to her superiors, particularly Valdriz and Cooper," Arquiza said.

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