

NEWS RELEASE
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Illegal recruiter gets life sentence

Judge Wilhelmina B. Jorge-Wagan of Pasay City Regional Trial Court found Josephine Navarro Tan guilty of engaging in the recruitment of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) without proper authorization from the government and was meted out life sentence for large scale illegal recruitment.

The case stemmed from an information filed by eight (8) applicants on September 5, 2016 against the accused for large scale illegal recruitment.

The complainants alleged Tan, by means of false representation and fraudulent allegations, impressed upon them that she has the capacity and authority to provide overseas employment in Cayman Islands.

Tan allegedly convinced them of sure employment as service crew members in Thai Orchid, a popular restaurant in Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands with a salary of CI\$16.000 per hour. They were told that working visas were already available and they will be deployed through direct hiring. The victims testified they were asked for payment of TESDA certificate, medical certificate, passport, and other processing fees.

The complainants also testified that they were not able to leave the country even after payment of fees and several promises of deployment dates. Tan was arrested at the airport after a commotion ensued when she told the applicants that their flight to Cayman Islands was cancelled.

On August 23, 2017, the court held that the accused is guilty beyond reasonable doubt of the crime of illegal recruitment in large scale and sentenced her accordingly to suffer the penalty of life imprisonment and to pay a fine of two million pesos and pay actual damages to the complainants.

In Republic Act No. 10022, illegal recruitment is deemed committed in large scale if committed against three (3) or more persons individually or as a group. The law provides stiffer penalties, especially for those that constitute economic sabotage, *i.e.*, illegal recruitment in large scale and illegal recruitment committed by a syndicate. END