

Three Filipinas Sentenced to Long Jail Terms for Drug Trafficking

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12 January 2010 - The Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong reiterated earlier warnings issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) calling on Filipinos traveling abroad not to be duped into serving as drug couriers.

This reminder came in the wake of last week's conviction and sentencing by the High Court of Hong Kong of three Filipinas to imprisonment of 14, 12, and eight years, respectively.

The first to be sentenced is a Filipina who was arrested by customs authorities at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) on 20 February 2009. She arrived from Malaysia carrying four books in her luggage, given to her by another Filipino who arranged her trip. Authorities found that the books concealed 1.2 kilograms of a drug mixture that contained 750 grams of heroin.

The Filipina, who was represented by a Hong Kong law firm, pleaded guilty to drug trafficking and will serve 14 years in jail.

Sentenced to 12 years in prison by the High Court is another Filipina who arrived from Malaysia on 10 June 2009. She was arrested at HKIA after authorities found in her luggage 380 grams of heroin. The drugs were hidden inside the buttons of 16 pieces of clothing.

The Filipina was reportedly offered US\$1,000 by a compatriot based in Malaysia to bring the

items to Hong Kong. The court handed down the sentence following her guilty plea.

Also sentenced by the High Court to eight years in jail after pleading guilty is a Filipina arrested for drug trafficking at HKIA on 1 June 2009. The subject was found with about 260 grams of cocaine kept inside her body.

Upon her arrest, the Filipina was immediately brought to a hospital where small plastic packets containing the drugs were extracted. She was also represented by a Hong Kong law firm.

Like most countries, Hong Kong considers drug trafficking a very serious offense. Under Hong Kong law, drug traffickers face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and a fine of up to HK\$5,000,000 (approximately US\$650,000).

The Consulate General has recommended the enhancement of cooperative efforts between Philippine security officials and their counterparts in other jurisdictions so that action can be taken to prevent Filipinos from becoming part of the drug trade. END