



Press Release

Taiwan Yilan District Prosecutors Office

Release date : Apr 12th, 2024

Media Contact : Head Prosecutor Dong

Contact Number : (03) 9253000

Yilan District Prosecutors Office Cracked Down and Prosecuted Transnational Criminal Organization Selling Taiwanese Passports.

The Yilan District Prosecutors Office in Taiwan recently received international intelligence from the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) of the National Police Agency of the Ministry of the Interior, reporting that multiple Taiwanese passports were fraudulently used by unidentified Chinese nationals to enter and exit European regions in October and November 2023. It is suspected that an international human trafficking syndicate has unlawfully utilized Taiwanese passports, which benefit from visa-free entry to 110 countries worldwide, to engage in forgery or misuse of these passports, thereby concealing their true identity and evading border controls.

The case was directed by Prosecutor Chen Yi-long, with a task force composed of CIB and the Yilan County Government Police Bureau. Several meetings were held to review the case, collect intelligence, analyze data from wiretaps, communication records, surveillance footage, and passport application materials to identify the suspects. On March 6, 113 2024, with a search warrant issued by the Yilan District Court, searches were conducted at the residences of the primary suspects surnamed Zheng and Lai in Yilan County, and both suspects were detained. The investigation was subsequently expanded, leading to the detention and summons of additional suspects surnamed Chi and Lin, along with other accomplices.

After a prolonged interrogation, the prosecutor charged the suspects Zheng and Lai with offenses under Article 3, Paragraph 1 of the Organized Crime Prevention Act (for leading a criminal organization) and Article 29, Item 1 of the Passport Act (for the sale of passports). The court approved the request for detention without bail for these

suspects. The other suspects were granted bail with amounts of NT\$30,000 or NT\$50,000. The case has been concluded today with the prosecution of the suspects and a request for the court to impose severe penalties on the main offenders.

The office urges that the sale of Taiwanese passports is a serious crime. Besides causing vulnerabilities in border controls across countries, individuals who use illegally obtained Taiwanese passports to enter European regions may have motives that threaten national security and undermine Taiwan's long-standing image as a quality global citizen. According to Taiwan's Passport Act, the maximum penalty is 7 years in prison, along with a fine of NT\$700,000. The public is advised not to engage in such illegal activities. The prosecution and police will continue to strengthen international intelligence exchanges and crack down on the unlawful use of Taiwanese passports, cooperating with other countries to fulfill Taiwan's responsibilities as a quality global citizen.