



## TAIWAN TAICHUNG DISTRICT PROSECUTORS OFFICE

### Press Release

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### **Taichung District Prosecutors Office Took the Initiative to Assign Cases and Is Committed to Combating the Crime of Human Trafficking**

In order to put an end to the crime of human trafficking and crack down on criminal gangs that lure domestic people to Cambodia and then force them to engage in illegal activities, Taichung District Prosecutors Office (“the Office”) took the initiative to assign cases and conduct investigations several days ago. Prosecutor of the Office commanded Taichung City Police Department and other judicial units to take actions. On September 16, 2022 at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, the team searched the airport and arrested the accused Wu upon his arrival by the flight from Cambodia. After interrogation, the prosecutor strongly suspected the accused Wu of violating Organized Crime Prevention Act, having been a swindler by means of causing the domestic victims to leave Taiwan, committing human trafficking and aggravated false pretense, and forcing women to have sexual intercourse with others for the purpose of gain fraudulently. In view of the possibility that the accused absconded, conspired with a co-offender or witness and destroyed the evidence, the prosecutor applied to the court for detention and holding incommunicado. The court ordered that the accused be released on bail of TWD300,000, and imposed restrictions on the exit from the border or the island of Taiwan. After receiving the court's ruling, the Office made an interlocutory appeal based on which the accused is on trial currently.

The accused in this case is a member of a criminal gang which has diversified its illegal operations in Cambodia, including fraud gangs, nightclub sex trade and other illegal businesses. By means of advertisements such as "high salaries" and "hotel services" on Facebook, IG and other social media, the gang has called on unspecified women to go abroad to Cambodia to work as nightclub b-girls. Immediately after

those women enter Cambodia, the gang forcibly withheld their passports by making the excuse of applying for a visa and then required them to sign a work contract. Once a woman backed out of continuing working as b-girl, she was sold to a specific nightclub for forced prostitution. The gang also used "entertaining tourism" as a pretext to lure the victims in Taiwan to depart for Cambodia. After the victims' arrival, their passports and mobile phones were forcibly confiscated. The gang detained the victims and forced them to engage in telecommunication fraud of "fake investment". It is verified that the accused surnamed Wu, in addition to participating in the aforementioned crimes, was also responsible for handling air tickets, thereby having caused 23 persons to leave Taiwan for Cambodia, and that several of them have not yet returned to Taiwan.

For this case, Prosecutor Pei-Chi Cheng of the Office commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6th Investigation Sections of Criminal Investigation Corps, Taichung City Police Department (TCPD); First Precinct and Wufeng Precinct, TCPC; Taichung City Specialized Operation Brigade of National Immigration Agency, Ministry of the Interior (MOI), and Aviation Police Bureau, National Police Agency, MOI to take actions. The team summoned several victims to clarify the case beforehand, and actively searched for evidence and made arrangements. On September 16, 2022 at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, the team searched the airport and arrested the accused Wu upon his arrival by the flight from Cambodia. After interrogation, the prosecutor strongly suspected the accused Wu of violating Organized Crime Prevention Act, having been a swindler by means of causing the domestic victims to leave Taiwan, committing human trafficking and aggravated false pretense, and forcing women to have sexual intercourse with others for the purpose of gain fraudulently. In view of the possibility that the accused absconded, conspired with a co-offender or witness and destroyed the evidence, the prosecutor applied to the court for detention and holding incommunicado. The court ordered that the accused be released on bail of TWD300,000, and imposed restrictions on the exit from the border or the island of Taiwan. After receiving the court's ruling, the Office made an interlocutory appeal based on which the accused is on trial currently.

In order to enforce search and arrest of the criminal organizations abducting Taiwanese nationals to Cambodia and even causing them to become victims of overseas human trafficking and be forced to prostitute or engage in criminal acts, Head Prosecutor and other prosecutors of the Office, under the instructions from Supreme Prosecutors Office, established the "Task Force to Strengthen Combating Criminal Organizations and Overseas Human Trafficking", and commanded the judicial police within the areas under the Office's jurisdiction to actively investigate whether illegal gangs in the areas have engaged in illegal activities of luring the people to go abroad for the purpose of human trafficking. To protect people from being lured by illegal gangs to go abroad when they are seeking jobs, the Office will continue to ferret the victims out, and, together with the police and diplomatic units, keep on rescuing the victims stranded in Cambodia; meanwhile, the expanded investigations have been under way into other gang members who still stay in Cambodia so as to thoroughly smash the criminal gang.