

## **EMBASSY ADVISORY ON DRUG TRAFFICKERS**

This is to reiterate the advisory issued by the Philippine Embassy on *10 October 2007*, regarding the “modus operandi” of black Africans in Asian capitals, most specifically Bangkok, which involves enticing Filipinos, among other nationalities, into smuggling drugs to China, Pakistan, Argentina, Brazil and other parts of South America, in exchange for large amounts of money.

The scheme involves befriending Filipino would-be victims before offering a considerable sum of money to do the simple task of bringing goods from Thailand to a designated country and vice-versa. In the case of deliveries to China, said goods from Thailand will be turned over to an associate/ accomplice, most often in Guangzhou. In-between, illegal drugs would be inserted in the pieces of luggage containing the purchased goods.

Also mentioned in a report to DFA from the Philippine Embassy in Buenos Aires was a Filipina arrested for transporting drugs to a province in Bolivia. Accordingly, the victim was recruited back in Manila to be a fruit picker in Australia by way of Bangkok. Upon arrival in Bangkok, she was kept in a house and instructed by African traffickers to proceed to South America via Hongkong and Johannesburg. When she got to Cochabamba, Bolivia, she was given a duffel bag and told to go to Sta Cruz dela Sierra, Bolivia’s commercial center where she got arrested eventually in a bus with two kilos of cocaine paste.

Moreover, the Embassy has also received several accounts of Filipinos who have been continually victimized and deceived by this modus operandi employed by drug syndicates. They have been arrested/ detained in various prison facilities in Thailand and other countries.

In view of the above, and to prevent further occurrences of the same nature, the Embassy strongly urges and recommends each and every Filipino here in Thailand to warn relatives, friends and kababayans about this scheme.

At present, the Embassy maintains records of Filipinos who are still languishing in jail for involvement in illegal drug activities. It should be noted that the Thai government imposes **harsh and severe penalties for trafficking, smuggling and manufacture of illegal drugs/ substances.** Further, the death penalty could also be meted out by the Chinese government to those who would possibly involve themselves with the illegal transit of drugs into China. As a deterrence, the crime of carrying drugs into Bolivia carries a penalty of a 25-year imprisonment.