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SEPTEMBER 27, 2012 ALEXANDRIA, VA

Chinese national convicted as part of long-term investigation into immigration fraud ring

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – A man illegally living in the United States was convicted at trial late Wednesday of attempting to bribe a corrupt government official to obtain a "green card," part of a long-term joint undercover investigation into a group of Chinese nationals engaged in purchasing fraudulent permanent resident alien cards.

The investigation was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Washington, D.C., and the Herndon Police Department.

"This conviction is the culmination of an intensive undercover investigation that dismantled an immigration fraud organization," said HSI Washington, D.C. Special Agent in Charge John P. Torres. "These organizations threaten our national security and place our communities at risk because they create a vulnerability that may enable terrorists and criminals to gain entry to and remain in the United States. HSI DC recognizes the extraordinary contribution by the Herndon Police Department and other law enforcement partners in our continued commitment to make our communities safer."

Rui Shui Chen, 44, a citizen of the People's Republic of China who was not legally present in the United States, was convicted Sept. 26 of conspiring to commit immigration fraud, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, and misuse of immigration documents, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for Dec. 14.

"Green cards sold on the black market pose a serious threat to our national security," said Neil H. MacBride, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. "This is a difficult crime to infiltrate, and the success of this investigation is a tribute to the patient and dedicated investigators at HSI DC and Herndon Police Department."

"This case highlights a growing, but invisible problem involving immigration fraud, one that affects all of our surrounding jurisdictions," said Herndon Police Chief Maggie A. DeBoard, "The ability to work closely with our federal partners on cases such as these provide opportunities for the successful apprehension and conviction of these individuals that would otherwise not be present. We greatly appreciate the tremendous support that HSI has provided throughout this case, as well as the support provided from the other local police departments, to bring this case to a successful conclusion."

According to court records and evidence at trial, Chen was one of 23 aliens and one U.S. citizen, including Xiaoyang Li, 52, Chang Yun Hui, 62, Shu Hong Zhao, 57, and Fu Guan Pan, 37, who conspired to pay as much as \$60,000 in bribes to individuals claiming to represent a corrupt government employee willing to produce unlawful and fraudulently issued green cards.

Li, Hui, Zhao and Pan acted as brokers, identifying and recruiting Chen and others, arranging for the conspirators - many of whom, including Chen, had exhausted their immigration appeals and been ordered to be removed from the United States - to meet with the individuals at various hotels and restaurants in northern Virginia. From January 2011 through June 2012, these conspirators met in groups with the individuals they believed were working for a corrupt government official to sign immigration documents, provide finger prints and produce any other required information to secure the fraudulent green cards.

Chen was among 24 individuals indicted June 14. Sixteen have been apprehended to date, including Li, Hui, Zhao and Pan. Eight of those charged remain fugitives.

Investigative assistance in this case was provided by the Prince William County Police Department, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air Branch.

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ron L. Walutes and Julia Martinez of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia's National Security and International Crime Unit.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

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