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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

California Woman Sentenced to More Than Three Years in Prison for Human Trafficking Charge

Daughter, Son-in-Law Sentenced on Immigration Charges

WASHINGTON— Fang Ping Ding was sentenced in federal court late yesterday to 37 months in prison for confiscating the passport, visa and other documents of a woman from the People's Republic of China in order to maintain control over the victim and force her to work as an unpaid, live-in domestic servant. During the same hearing, Ding's daughter, Wei Wei Liang, and her son-in-law, Bo Shen, were sentenced to home confinement and probationary sentences, respectively, on related immigration charges of harboring the victim, who entered and remained in the United States illegally, in their Fremont, Calif., home. The court also ordered that the defendants jointly pay the victim \$83,866.61 and that Liang and Shen also forfeit \$346,000 to the government.

The defendants pleaded guilty on Nov. 1, 2010. Ding admitted that she forced the victim to work without pay by physically abusing her, threatening to falsely report her to law enforcement and maintaining control of her visa and passport. Ding began recruiting the victim in China in December 2007, and eventually brought the victim to the United States in April 2008. All three defendants admitted to harboring the victim in their Fremont home until April 2009. The victim provided cooking, cleaning and child care services. Ding gave the victim's identity documents to Liang, who kept the documents locked in a bedroom. Ding and Liang also admitted to telling the victim that she needed to remain inside the house because she was an illegal alien. The sentences were handed down by U.S. District Judge Saundra Brown Armstrong in the Northern District of California.

"The defendants deprived the victim of her freedom through physical abuse and psychological intimidation for their own financial benefit," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "Their conduct created a condition of modern-day slavery for the victim within the walls of their home. The Department of Justice is committed to vigorously prosecuting cases of human trafficking."

"By being forced to work without pay for more than a year, physically abused and having her visa and passport taken from her, the victim in this case was denied a basic constitutional right that American's take for granted — freedom," said Melinda Haag, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California. "Not since 1865, when the Thirteenth amendment to the Constitution was ratified, has slavery been tolerated in this country. My office will continue to work diligently to uphold the laws of the United States and ensure everyone's rights are protected."

"No one should be forced to live in a world of isolation and servitude as this victim was, particularly in a country that prides itself on its freedoms," said Mark Wollman, Special Agent in Charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations. "It's a sad reflection on human greed and heartlessness, that people believe they can engage in this kind of egregious exploitation with impunity. These sentences should send a message to those who traffic in human beings that ICE Homeland Security Investigations and its federal law enforcement partners are committed to protecting those who cannot protect themselves."

The U.S. Attorney filed charges in a superseding information against Ding, 62, Liang, 36, and Shen, 43, all of Fremont, on May 27, 2010. Ding was charged with and pleaded guilty to one count of unlawful conduct regarding documents in furtherance of forced labor. Liang and Shen were each charged with and pleaded guilty to one count of harboring an illegal alien for purposes of private financial gain.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew S. Huang of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California and Trial Attorney Karen Ruckert Lopez of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division prosecuted the case with the assistance of legal assistant Jeanne Carstensen. This case was

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the result of a joint investigation between the FBI and ICE Homeland Security Investigations that arose from a referral by the Fremont Police Department in coordination with the San Jose Police Department Human Trafficking Task Force.

Combating human trafficking is a top priority of the Department of Justice. In each of the past two fiscal years, the Civil Rights Division, in partnership with U.S. Attorneys' Offices, has brought record numbers of human trafficking prosecutions. Anyone who suspects instances of human trafficking are encouraged to call the Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-3737-888. Anonymous calls are welcome.

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Civil Rights Division

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