



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
سفارة جمهورية الفلبين
MANAMA
INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. AAV-029-2018

To all Filipinos in Bahrain

29 July 2018 – Pleased be informed that the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime , INTERPOL NCB Manila SECRETARIAT, has provide the Embassy a copy of the INTERPOL Purple Notice –P765/6-2018, describing the modus operandi regarding immigration and visa related fraud.

According to INTERPOL, applicants of visa and residence/work permits were scammed by entities that pose as immigration law firm, visa travel company, organization or government agency.

The Embassy warns Filipinos in Bahrain about this modus operandi and advises the public to be alert and to take whatever preventive and precautionary measures they may deem appropriate in order not to fall victim to said schemes.

For any information and investigative leads on the matter, please contact the INTERPOL Manila National Central Bureau Secretariat thru telefax number (+632)7214162 for proper Coordination with the INTERPOL Command and Coordination Center, Lyon, France.

Attached, is a copy of the INTERPOL Purple Notice No. P-765/6-2018.


ALFONSO A. VER
Ambassador

Control No.: P-765/6-2018

General Secretariat: EDPS-OEC-CNET-FCU

File No.: 2018/47537-1

Date of publication: 02/06/2018



MODUS OPERANDI

Type(s) of offence:	Advanced Fee Fraud
Date of the offence	Ongoing
Place of offence:	Global – but especially targeting persons on the African continent
Country of offence:	
Circumstances of offence:	<p>Immigration and visa related fraud:</p> <p>Applicants for visa and residence/work permits got scammed by entities that pose as immigration law firm, visa travel company, an organization or as a governmental agency. Victims conducted payments for the administrative processes up to equivalent 10.000 USD but didn't get the visa or the documents they applied for.</p>
Description of modus operandi:	<p>During the last weeks INTERPOL's General Secretariat has seen several complaints and information shared by victims and the general public in the field of advanced fee fraud, especially immigration and visa related fraud.</p>
Object/device/concealment method/procedure.	<p>The victims got scammed whilst applying for an immigration visa for scholarship, study or for residence and working permits. Doing so they conducted payments in order to go through diverse administrative processes, but were never granted with the visa and the documents they applied.</p> <p>The scammers are posing as immigration law firms, visa travel companies, organizations or even as official governmental agencies and offer professional support to immigrate to another country (i.e. Canada, as seen in recent scams). The offer cover a range of immigration reasons, as for instance for study, scholarship, guaranteed and high-paid jobs and to live and work permanently abroad.</p> <p>The offenders use social engineering methods when calling the victims on the phone, sending emails or letters that include false or fake documents and application forms or routing them to fake or look-alike websites that are under control of the culprits.</p> <p>Documents that have to be filled and provided by the victims can be assessments for language ability (i.e. IELTS test - International English Language Testing System), birth certificate and passport copies, academic certificates, working experience, international education credentials. The offenders provide</p>

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links to websites and portals where the victims have to upload the required documents.

Victims are pushed and persuaded to pay fees and installments (i.e. for the administrative processes, acceptance of the certificates, online examinations) and to conduct wire transfers, to deposit money into an individual's personal bank account or to transfer money through a specific private money transfer company in advance.

In some cases fees are requested to allegedly participate in a training course as part of the application process, thus the offenders request the payments for the travel and accommodation expenses to the training camp.

In recent cases often persons from the African continent have been seen targeted and victimized in this scheme. The fees and installments requested by the criminals can range up to amounts in local currency which is equivalent to 10.000 USD.

Request from IPSG – Financial Crime Unit:

It is recommended to strengthen awareness campaigns on a local and regional level and to flag this ongoing fraud scheme in the public, especially in African countries/jurisdictions.

Please also take note of some fraud warning notifications already published by other official agencies, as for instance in Canada and the U.S.:

Government of Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/fraud-english.pdf>

U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fraud.html>

Points of contact: INTERPOL General Secretariat, EDPS-OEC-CNET-FCU

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+ 33 4 72 44 76 76

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Recommended precautionary action:

It is strongly recommended that you circulate this purple notice to your country's law enforcement bodies to alert them about this modus operandi and to allow them to take whatever preventive and precautionary measures they deem necessary. All recipients are strongly encouraged to share data, and provide any investigative information relating to this modus operandi.

Reference number: 2018/130/OEC/CNET/FCU/ARE

Please note that if a notice or a diffusion for a person involved in the case is required, this can be requested through the I-link portal after you have determined the purpose of such a request.