



TRANSLATION OF SUARA NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

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January-May 2013:

Hong Kong has Arrested 268 Overstayed Migrant Workers

BMI = Indonesian Migrant Worker

From January until May 2013, Hong Kong police has arrested 268 overstayed migrant workers. Out of the 268 overstayed migrant workers, 214 went to court and were penalized either by detention or monetary fine. After they went through that process they were deported from Hong Kong.

“We suggested especially for women migrant workers who overstayed in Hong Kong, it doesn’t matter how long, it’s better to surrender, especially if they have children (in Hong Kong) or if they are pregnant,” according to Luna, Chief Operations Officer Pathfinders, Tuesday, (3/9/2013).

Hong Kong immigration does not have detention facility for children or pregnant women. According to Luna, if women migrant workers have children or are pregnant, they will not be detained by Immigration until the court process is finish.

Those migrant workers usually only need to report until their court schedule fixed.

“The story will be different if you are caught (overstayed random check). They will be detained at police’s criminal prison, no matter whether they are pregnant or have young children, because Hong Kong Police has prison facility to accommodate pregnant women and children below 3 years old,” Luna explained. If age of the child is more than 3 years old, the child will be placed at government’s orphanage institution until mother’s detention period is finish.

From 2006 until May 2013, Hong Kong Police has arrested 4398 overstayed migrant workers. Luna said, overstayed migrant workers who surrender can ask for leniency either for detention period or fine before they are deported.

Pathfinders accompanied a BMI who has overstayed in Hong Kong for years and was hiding in Tuen Mun with her 3 children. This BMI was accompanied by Pathfinders to

surrender to immigration in order to process her deportation to Indonesia.

"This migrant worker who has overstayed for years thought that she will be detained for years as well, as a result she did not want to surrender. That is precisely what makes them illegal and susceptible of being used, being exploited by others," Luna explained. Luna recommends that all women migrant workers who overstayed their visa to surrender to immigration. *"It is only a matter of time before they get caught,"* she said.

Since 2009, total overstayed migrant workers who went to court has significantly increased to 532 persons. A year before was 341 persons only. Since 2009 total overstayed migrant worker who went to court is always around 500 persons. Neither Hong Kong immigration nor PathFinders can explain why overstayed number increased in 2009.

Since 2009 until now Hong Kong government has opened cases for around 550 overstayed migrant workers every year.

