BI nabs 3 Korean fugitives wanted for telecom fraud

MANILA, Philippines - The Bureau of Immigration (BI) reported the arrest of three South Korean nationals wanted by authorities in Seoul for involvement in telecommunications fraud.

Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente identified the foreigners as Lim Yeongjun, 36; Kwom Hyeoksoo, 49; and, Sim Dong Woo, 49.

The three were arrested last Tuesday, 04 August 2020, by joint operatives from the BI’s Fugitive Search Unit (FSU) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) inside the office of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) at the Southern Police District (SPD) Headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City where they were taken earlier into custody by policemen.

Morente said the Koreans, who are all overstaying aliens, are subjects of red notices from the Interpol, and that their passports were already revoked by their government.

The BI Chief, however, stressed that the subjects cannot be deported yet as they are facing criminal charges for violating the 1988 Access Device Regulation Act and 2011 Anti-Cybercrime Law.

In fact, the suspects are currently detained at the custodial facility of the CIDG while undergoing criminal investigation prior to the filing of complaints against them in court.

"It is only after these criminal charges are resolved, and upon completion of service of sentence, if they are convicted, that we will be able to deport them," Morente added.

Information obtained from the BI Interpol Unit revealed that the fugitives operated clandestine call centers in Manila, which they used to trick and defraud their victims.

They allegedly deceived the victims by pretending that they are agents of lending institutions, and persuading the former to repay their loans in advance in order to avail of lower interest.

Korean authorities charged that the fugitives amassed from their phishing activities more than 80 million won or roughly more than US$67,000, which the unsuspecting victims deposited into the suspects' bank accounts.

“Consequently, we're not only able to bring these criminals to justice. We also prevented them from using our country as a refuge so they could evade prosecution for their crimes. Besides, their presence here poses a threat to our people’s welfare and safety,” the BI Chief said.