U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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News Releases

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Final defendant sentenced in ICE worksite probe targeting northern California restaurants

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - The former owner of an Asian buffet restaurant in Vacaville, Calif., has been sentenced to eight months of home confinement and three years probation on charges stemming from an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) into allegations he hired illegal aliens to work at the business.

A federal judge sentenced Rui Tao Lin, 53, the former owner of the King's Buffet in Vacaville, Calif., on Friday. In addition to home confinement and probation, the judge also ordered Lin to pay $49,000 in criminal fines. In November, Lin pleaded guilty to employing illegal aliens and mail fraud.

Lin, who now lives in Glen Falls, N.Y., was the owner of King's Buffet in Vacaville until the summer of 2008. In his guilty plea, Lin admitted that, from June 2006 until September 2008, he hired and assisted in the hiring of employees he knew were illegal aliens. The business hired at least 13 undocumented workers during that time. The King's Buffet would contact an employment agency in Los Angeles to recruit Asian employees. Other employees, typically from Mexico and Central America, responded to "Help Wanted" notices placed in the business.

Lin is the seventh and final defendant to be sentenced in the case, which culminated in September 2008 after ICE executed search warrants at the King's Buffet, the Empire Buffet in Vallejo, Calif., and two residences. During the enforcement action, ICE arrested 21 illegal alien workers on administrative immigration violations who were encountered at the search locations.

At Lin's sentencing, the judge noted that the defendant conspired with an employment agency to hire aliens who, due to their illegal status, were vulnerable to exploitation. The judge pointed out that the defendant benefitted financially by not paying taxes, fees, and proper salaries for the illegal employees. He rebuked the defendant's contention that the victims were not taken advantage of because the conditions in the United States were better than those they left behind in China.

Last month, two of Lin's co-defendants Rui Yang Lin and Bi Xia Ni were each sentenced to 36 months

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