



Released on 12 September 2017

Press Release

Court of Appeal upholds the Court of First Instance's Decision on Trafficking Case of 98 Rohingya

On September 11, 2017, the Provincial Court of Pak Phanang, Nakhon Si Thammarat read out the decision by the Court of Appeal on the case regarding the trafficking of the Rohingyas in Hua Sai District (Black Case No. 768/2558). The Court of Appeal confirms the decision of the Court of First Instance in; sentencing Mr. Sunun or Ko Mit Saengthong, Defendant No.1, the recruiter of the Rohingyas, to 15 years in prison and 666,000 THB in fine; convicting the Defendant No.2 and 3 who acted as drivers transporting the Rohingyas of the offence according to Immigration Act. Adding to the conviction of trafficking in persons and enslavement crimes, the Defendant No. 1 was found guilty of false confinement, while it was found that the acts committed by the Defendants did not constitute transnational organized crime.

Background of the case: On January 11, 2015, the officials from Hua Sai Provincial Police, Nakhon Si Thammarat stopped at checkpoint 5 pickup trucks passing through Hua Sai District smuggling the Rohingyas from Ranong to Songkhla. The officials found 98 Rohingya individuals (30 males, 26 females, 42 children below 15 years old) being crammed at the back of the trucks and appearing very exhausted. Among them, one individual was found dead from suffocation, and another individual was found dead later on. The officials managed to arrest and prosecute 3 truck drivers while the rest escaped arrest.

The Court of First Instance in this case made the decision on August 31, 2016, having transaction in bank accounts and phone call logs as substantial evidence linking the case to the historic case of the trafficking of the Rohingyas where cages confining the victims and numerous bodies were found in Padang Besar, Sadao District, Songkhla.