

## Forged Travel Document Cases in 1999

In 1999, **3530** suspected forged documents were encountered which represented **2732** suspects intercepted for offences relating to forged, false, or unlawfully obtained travel documents. Of these 2732 persons, **1514** (55%) were prosecuted and the remaining **1218** (45%) were not.

### Prosecution Cases

2. All the accused in the 1514 prosecution cases had made admission statements. Of these 1514 cases, **1492** (98.5%) were convicted including:-

- (i) **1405** cases where the accused pleaded guilty as charged. Of them, **571** (40.6%) cases were prosecuted mainly in reliance on the suspects' admission statement and Immigration Department's examination of the suspected forged travel documents. The remaining **834** (59.4%) cases were supported by additional evidence, such as forensic examination, verification with consulates, criminal records or immigration records, etc; and
- (ii) **87** cases where the accused pleaded not guilty were convicted after trial.

3. There was no conviction in respect of the remaining **22** (1514 – 1492) cases. These include **4** defendants who were acquitted after trial on the grounds that the confession statements were not admitted as evidence by the court. The remaining **18** cases were not convicted for various reasons, such as the prosecution offered no evidence or withdrew the charges after seeking legal advice or re-assessing the additional evidence.

### Non-prosecution Cases

4. Of the **1218** cases in which prosecution action had not been initiated, **424** (35%) had been referred to Immigration Department's prosecutors who were not involved in the investigation process for separate and independent assessment. After assessing the evidence, the immigration prosecutors decided not to prosecute. The remaining **794** (65%) cases were not referred to the prosecutors mainly because the evidence in hand did not support a prima facie case for prosecution. Of these cases, 4 persons were satisfied to be holding authentic travel documents upon secondary examination by the investigators.