

Duo charged under Atipsom Act: Court

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Michael and Phoebe, who were brought before Judge Leonard David Shim, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

KOTA KINABALU: A retired mechanic and a Filipina were charged at the High

Court here Thursday under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrant (Atipsom) Act 2007. Michael Pillai, 62, and Phoebe Yanoc Indoc, 60, were jointly accused of concealing or harbouring two smuggled Filipina migrants between Nov 18, 2022 at 10pm and Nov 23 the same year in a house at Kg Nosoob Baru, Penampang. Michael and Phoebe, who were brought before Judge Leonard David Shim, pleaded not guilty to the charge. The offence under Section 26H of the Atipsom Act 2007 read together with Section 34 of the Penal Code provides for a jail term of up to 10 years or a fine or both, on conviction. Counsel Julhamri Jumhani, representing Michael, applied for bail and submitted, among others, that Michael, who has been under remand since Nov 29, 2022, is a Malaysian citizen residing in Penampang, suffered from tuberculosis (TB) and did not pose any flight risk. Julhamri applied for bail in the sum of RM10,000 with RM5,000 deposited in one surety should bail be granted. The prosecution opposed the bail application on the grounds, among others, that the offence was classified as a security offence. The court was also informed that the second accused, Phoebe did not have documents. Leonard allowed Michael's bail application and released him on a bail of RM18,000 fully deposited in two sureties with conditions to report twice to the nearest police station each week, not to tamper with the prosecution's witnesses, his passport, if any, to be impounded. Any breach will result in the bail being revoked. The judge also directed that the second accused find a lawyer to represent her. No bail was granted for Phoebe. The court set Aug 10 for further mention of the case. Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) Nur Faezah Jafry prosecuted.