

## Suggested Advice

On Monday March 31, 2014, officers from the Toronto Police Service, Financial Crimes arrested the following female in relation to ongoing travel fraud allegations:

### **Maria Rowena Santiago BELEN, of Toronto**

It is alleged that:

- Between 2011 and 2014, the accused, who is a licensed travel agent, had been offering discounted fare prices on travel to Asia. Payments were made by victims, but tickets were never actually purchased by the accused.
- Between 2011 and 2014 Maria Rowena Belen defrauded investors via a bulk airline ticket purchase scheme.
- Victims of the offences, are primarily from the **Filipino** community
- The losses exceed one million dollars.

The Toronto Police Service are reminding members of the public to take appropriate steps to minimize financial risk to themselves , when purchasing airline tickets:

- Ensure the travel agency used is properly registered with The Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO)
- Check the TICO webpage at @ [www.tico.ca](http://www.tico.ca), or call at 1-888-451-TICO (8426) for information related to appropriate practices of travel agencies.
- Be suspicious of travel agents and “representatives” that demand cash payment only
- Don’t accept verbal confirmation of airline ticket purchases. (Always demand receipts)