

## Hong Kong Customs and Police seize suspected illegally imported strategic commodities in joint operation (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs and the Police conducted a joint operation yesterday (April 12) and today (April 13) in Mong Kok and Ma On Shan to combat the illegal import of strategic commodities. A batch of strategic commodities suspected to be imported without a valid licence was seized, including 133 gas masks, 175 filter canisters and four helmets. Eight persons were arrested.

Law enforcement agencies earlier received information alleging the sale of suspected illegally imported strategic commodities at some shops in Mong Kok district. After investigation, Customs and the Police conducted a joint enforcement operation during the above-mentioned period and first seized a batch of strategic commodities suspected to be imported without a valid licence at two shops in Mong Kok, including 29 gas masks, six filter canisters and four helmets. Seven persons suspected to be connected with the case were arrested.

Later, law enforcement agencies arrested another person suspected to be in connection with the case at a residential unit in Ma On Shan, where 104 gas masks and 169 filter canisters were seized.

During the operation, five men and three women, aged between 19 and 33, were arrested. They comprise three company directors, four salespersons and a person who stored the items concerned at one of the shops involved.

Investigation is ongoing. The arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation and the likelihood of further arrests is not excluded.

Under the Import and Export Ordinance (IEO), any person who imports or exports gas masks, filter canisters or helmets belonging to the control list of strategic commodities under the Import and Export (Strategic Commodities) Regulations without a valid import or export licence commits an offence and is liable to an unlimited fine and to imprisonment for seven years on conviction.

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the IEO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

