

Hong Kong Customs combats illicit cigarette activities (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (August 14) mounted an operation against illicit cigarette activities across the territory and seized about 1.4 million suspected illicit cigarettes and about 30 000 suspected illicit heat-not-burn (HNB) products with an estimated market value of about \$4 million and a duty potential of about \$2.8 million.

Customs officers inspected a cross-boundary truck declared as carrying assorted goods at a logistics site in Kwai Chung. After inspection, Customs officers found about 1.38 million suspected illicit cigarettes in 115 carton boxes mix-loaded with other goods on board the truck.

Also, Customs officers detected two cases of suspected illicit cigarettes for storage and distribution. They seized about 20 000 suspected illicit cigarettes at a residential unit in Sheung Shui and found about 30 000 suspected illicit HNB products in a motorcycle in Kwun Tong.

During the operation, Customs officers arrested three men aged 31 to 46. A cross-boundary truck and a motorcycle suspected to be in connection with the cases were detained.

Investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

