

Hong Kong Customs detects money laundering case involving counterfeiting syndicate

Hong Kong Customs mounted an operation today (June 2) and arrested two persons suspected of dealing with proceeds generated from the sale of counterfeit goods and engaging in money laundering activities. The amount involved in the case was about \$5.6 million.

Acting upon intelligence, Customs officers targeted an online counterfeiting syndicate that was suspected of using personal bank accounts to receive payments from the sale of counterfeit goods and participating in money laundering activities. After in-depth investigation, Customs mounted an arrest operation today and raided two residential premises in Yuen Long. Two women, aged 39 and 57, suspected to be involved in the case were arrested for "dealing with property known or reasonably believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offence" (commonly known as money laundering) under the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance.

Initial investigation revealed that they had opened personal bank accounts at various banks in Hong Kong and received money from selling counterfeit goods through bank transfer or cash deposits and engaged in money laundering activities involving about \$5.6 million in total between May 2019 and January 2020.

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

Under the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance, a person commits an offence if he or she deals with any property knowing or having reasonable grounds to believe that such property in whole or in part directly or indirectly represents any person's proceeds of an indictable offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and imprisonment for 14 years while the crime proceeds are also subject to confiscation.

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