

Hong Kong Customs detects smuggling case involving about \$100 million of goods by ocean-going vessel (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs on April 4 detected a suspected case of using an ocean-going vessel to smuggle goods to Malaysia at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. A large batch of suspected smuggled electronic components, goods and waste, with a total estimated market value of about \$100 million, was seized.

Through intelligence analysis and risk assessment, Customs discovered that criminals intended to use ocean-going vessels to smuggle goods and thus formulated strategies to combat related activities, and identified an ocean-going vessel preparing to depart from Hong Kong to Malaysia for inspection.

Customs officers on April 4 mounted an operation and seized a large batch of suspected smuggled goods, including integrated circuits, computer servers, routers, together with a batch of electronic waste, inside a container which was declared as containing aluminum alloy aboard the vessel.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers arrested a 53-year-old woman suspected to be connected with the case the next day (April 5).

An investigation is ongoing. The arrested woman has been released on bail pending further investigation and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Customs is the primary agency responsible for the suppression of smuggling activities and has all along been combating various smuggling activities at the forefront. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to fiercely combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, along with mounting targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to land a solid blow against relevant activities.

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 Waste Disposal Ordinance, it is an offence for anyone to import or export hazardous waste without obtaining a valid permit beforehand. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to

Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

