

Hong Kong Customs detects smuggling case involving suspected scheduled dried shark fins, electronic products and cigars by fishing vessel (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs on March 22 detected a suspected smuggling case involving a fishing vessel in the western waters of Hong Kong. A batch of smuggled goods, including suspected scheduled dried shark fins, electronic products and cigars, with a total estimated market value of about \$25 million, was seized. A fishing vessel was detained.

Customs mounted an anti-smuggling operation in Tuen Mun that night and spotted a suspicious fishing vessel berthing at a shore where suspected smuggling activities have taken place. Later, the vessel left Tuen Mun and headed towards the waters west of Hong Kong. Customs officers later intercepted the vessel near the waters around Tai O for inspection and found the batch of suspected smuggled goods inside a hidden compartment on the vessel.

During the operation, four male crew members aged between 31 and 53, who were suspected to be connected with the case, were arrested.

They were charged with one count of attempting to export unmanifested cargoes. They will appear at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (March 25).

Being a government department primarily responsible for tackling smuggling activities, Customs has long been combating various smuggling activities on all fronts. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to resolutely combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, and carry out targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to disrupt relevant crimes.

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 Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586), any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance commits an offence and will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years upon conviction with the specimens forfeited.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

