

# Hong Kong Customs seizes over 2.4 million suspected illicit heat-not-burn products in two phases operation (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs has mounted an operation codenamed "Sunny" since July this year to combat smuggling of illicit heat-not-burn (HNB) products into Hong Kong. Customs officers conducted the second phase of the enforcement operation and mounted an operation codenamed "Sunny II" across the territory from October 31 to today (November 26). In the second phase operation, about 1 million suspected illicit HNB products with an estimated market value of about \$3 million and a duty potential of about \$2 million were seized. Twenty-four persons were arrested.

During the operation, Customs officers seized the above-mentioned suspected illicit HNB products at Hong Kong International Airport, Tsim Sha Tsui, Lai Chi Kok and Kwun Tong respectively. Six storage and distribution centres were smashed. Sixteen men and eight women, aged between 17 and 57, were also arrested. Customs believes that an HNB products smuggling syndicate was smashed.

In the first phase of the operation, Customs seized about 1.44 million suspected illicit HNB product with an estimated market value of about \$4.3 million and a duty potential of about \$2.8 million were seized. Eight storage and distribution centres were smashed and 34 persons were arrested.

A total of about 2.44 million suspected illicit HNB products with an estimated market value of about \$7.3 million and a duty potential of about \$4.8 million were seized so far for the operation. Fifty-eight persons were arrested.

Hong Kong Customs will continue taking stringent enforcement action against illicit cigarette activities of different kinds.

Customs reminds members of the public that under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO), tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any HNB products containing tobacco in content is also dutiable goods subject to the control of the DCO. Any person who imports, possesses, sells or buys dutiable commodities without a valid licence commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may call the Customs' hotline at 2815 7711 to enquire whether a specific tobacco or smoking product is under the regulation of the DCO. They may also report any suspected violation of the DCO to Customs' 24-hour hotline at 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

