

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected dangerous drugs worth about \$9.1 million in anti-narcotics operation (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an anti-narcotics operation codenamed "Sniper II" between January 1 and May 16 to combat syndicates smuggling drugs by using consolidated consignments.

In view of the upward trend of drug syndicates making use of consolidated consignments to smuggle drugs into Hong Kong, Customs, through risk assessment, have conducted strike and search operations at local consolidator companies to examine suspicious parcels. During the operation, Customs detected 14 cases and seized about 20 kilograms of suspected dangerous drugs, including about 8.5kg of suspected ketamine, about 5.2kg of suspected cannabis-type dangerous drugs, about 4kg of suspected methamphetamine and about 2kg of suspected cocaine. The total estimated market value of the seizures was about \$9.1 million.

In one of the cases, Customs officers arrested a 59-year-old man in Lai Chi Kok while he collected a parcel in which about 2kg of suspected ketamine was concealed. He was released on bail pending further investigation.

In another case, Customs yesterday (May 16) conducted a controlled delivery operation in Kwai Chung and seized about 3.5kg of suspected ketamine from a parcel received by a 47-year-old foreign man. The man, who was suspected of trafficking in a dangerous drug, was immediately arrested. Later, Customs officers searched the man's residence and found a batch of drug packaging paraphernalia which was believed to be used for repackaging and redistributing drugs therein. An investigation is ongoing and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

The parcels seized in this operation mainly originated from European and American regions, and were delivered to Hong Kong through consolidated consignments. Drug syndicates tend to make use of daily products including skincare products, cosmetic products and shampoo bottles to disguise or conceal the drugs inside the interlinings of packing materials or mix-load them with snacks in order to evade Customs inspection and increase the difficulty of Customs detection.

Customs will continue to step up enforcement against drug trafficking activities through intelligence analysis. The department also reminds members of the public to stay alert and not to participate in drug trafficking activities for monetary return. They must not accept hiring or delegation from another party to carry controlled items into and out of Hong Kong. They are also reminded not to carry unknown items for other people, nor to release their personal data or home address to others for receiving parcels or goods.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Young people should especially pay attention to the fact that drug trafficking is a serious criminal offence. A criminal conviction will result in grave repercussions for their future and they should not take risks in the hope that they may not be caught.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking 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).

