

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \\$10 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (June 15) and today (June 16) mounted anti-illicit cigarette operations and seized about 3.6 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$10 million and a duty potential of about \$6.9 million.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers yesterday selected for inspection a seaborne container, declared as carrying food, arriving in Hong Kong from Vietnam at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. About 1.8 million suspected illicit cigarettes were found mix-loaded with other goods inside the container. After investigation, a 30-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case was arrested on the same day.

Also, during an anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted in Yuen Long today, Customs officers seized about 1.8 million suspected illicit cigarettes at a residential unit in the district and arrested a 40-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case. A light goods vehicle suspected to be involved was also detained. Customs believes that a suspected illicit cigarette storehouse was raided during the operation.

Investigations of the two cases are ongoing.

Customs will continue to combat illicit cigarette activities on all fronts through a multi-pronged approach.

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 Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

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

