

Hong Kong Customs steps up enforcement to combat counterfeit goods activities (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an operation codenamed "Tracer II" over the past two weeks to combat cross-boundary transshipment and local sale of counterfeit goods and seized about 80 000 items of suspected counterfeit goods, including watches, mobile phone accessories, sunglasses and fashion accessories, with an estimated market value of over \$22 million. Five persons were arrested.

The operation was conducted from April 26 to May 9. Through intelligence analysis, Customs officers first identified about 30 logistics companies in Yuen Long, Tsing Yi and Kwai Chung, and performed strike-and-search operations. About 78 000 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$21 million were seized.

After follow-up investigation, Customs believed that some of the suspected counterfeit goods would have been sold locally while the rest would have been re-exported to overseas destinations. Subsequently, Customs officers organised two controlled delivery operations. On April 26, Customs officers raided a suspected counterfeit sports footwear retail shop in an industrial building in Kwun Tong. About 880 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$960,000 were seized. Four men aged 25 or 26 were arrested. Thereafter, on May 4, Customs officers arrested a 25-year-old female consignee in a Grade A office unit in Tsuen Wan. Nineteen items of suspected counterfeit handbags, clothes and accessories with an estimated value of about \$10,000 were seized.

Investigation is ongoing and the five arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs appeals to consumers to purchase goods at reputable shops or websites and to check with the trademark owners or authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs also reminds traders and online sellers not to sell counterfeit goods and to be cautious and prudent in merchandising.

Customs will continue to step up stringent inspection and enforcement to vigorously combat counterfeiting activities in various ways.

Selling counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions. Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who imports or exports or sells or possesses for sale any goods to which a forged trademark is applied commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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

