

## Mainland fishermen suspected of operating illegally in Hong Kong waters charged (with photo)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (December 7) laid charges against two Mainland fishermen on board a Mainland fishing vessel suspected of engaging in illegal fishing in Hong Kong waters near Tuen Tsui.

AFCD officers intercepted a Mainland fishing vessel suspected to be carrying out illegal fishing by gill net in the above-mentioned waters at about 10am yesterday (December 6) for investigation. Some fishing gear and catches were seized on board.

Charges were laid against the two Mainland fishermen found on board the vessel. They were suspected to have engaged in fishing activities that are against the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (Cap. 171) (the Ordinance). They will appear at Fanling Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (December 8).

Only a vessel registered under the Ordinance can be used for fishing in Hong Kong waters. Regardless of the type of fishing gear used, a non-local fishing vessel is not allowed to carry out fishing activities in Hong Kong waters. Any offender on conviction is liable to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for six months.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The Government is committed to cracking down on illegal fishing activities in Hong Kong waters. The AFCD will continue to step up patrols and stringently enforce the law."

