

# Mainlanders suspected of operating illegally in Hong Kong waters charged

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) officers charged 12 men on board a Mainland vessel suspected of engaging in illegal fishing in Mirs Bay today (October 17).

The AFCD officers intercepted a Mainland vessel suspected to be carrying out illegal fishing activities in the waters off Port Island at about 4pm yesterday. Some catch and fishing gear were seized on board.

Charges were laid today against the 12 Mainland men found on the vessel. They were suspected to have engaged in fishing activities which are against the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (Cap. 171) (the Ordinance). They will appear at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on Monday (October 19).

According to the Ordinance, only a registered vessel 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. The AFCD will continue to step up patrols and stringently enforce the law."