

Mastermind and members of smuggling syndicate jailed for conspiracy to smuggle

One mastermind and four members of a smuggling syndicate were convicted and sentenced to 36 to 42 months' imprisonment at the District Court today (March 22) for conspiracy to smuggle, in contravention of the Import and Export Ordinance (IEO).

Hong Kong Customs and the Marine Police conducted a joint-operation in April last year and detected a suspected smuggling case using speedboats in Lau Fau Shan. A total of 11 014 smartphones and 168 tablets were seized. After follow-up investigation, Customs officers further seized a large amount of packing materials in an industrial building unit in Tuen Mun. The estimated market value of the seizure in the operation was about \$9 million.

Customs welcomes the verdict. The sentences have a strong deterrent effect on sea smuggling activities and the case is significant in the context of Customs enforcement against smuggling syndicates.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the IEO, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

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