

# Police conduct anti-illegal bookmaking operations during EURO 2020

Police conducted a large-scale anti-illegal bookmaking operation codenamed "CROWBEAK cum WINDSHIELD" during the EURO 2020 in June and July, resulting in the arrest of 824 persons and seizure of betting records valued over \$3.6 billion and over \$23 million cash.

In this operation, Police conducted a total of 137 raids, leading to the arrest of 824 persons, including 475 males and 349 females, aged between 14 and 87, for the offences of "engaging in bookmaking", "betting with a bookmaker", "operating illegal gambling establishments", "dealing with property known or reasonably believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offence" (commonly known as "money laundering"), etc.

Police also seized over \$3.6 billion of betting records, over \$23 million of suspected crime proceeds in cash, 57 sets of computers and four vehicles suspected to represent crime proceeds. Furthermore, an aggregate bank balance of over \$21 million believed to be proceeds of crime was withheld from various bank accounts. Both the number of arrests and the amount of seizures are record high in similar operations in the past decade.

In addition, Police also carried out the following preventive measures and education campaigns before and during the EURO 2020 period:

- anti-illegal gambling publicity on Police Facebook, Instagram and Weibo channels;
- distribution of posters and banners with anti-illegal gambling messages at entertainment premises, restaurants and strategic locations; and
- working closely with the Home Affairs Bureau and the Ping Wo Fund to promote anti-illegal gambling messages through various channels.

Police appeal to the public:

1. Under the Gambling Ordinance Cap. 148, anyone who bets with a bookmaker commits an offence and is liable on first conviction to a fine of \$10,000 and to imprisonment for three months;
2. Anyone who engages in bookmaking commits an offence and is liable to conviction to a fine of \$5,000,000 and to imprisonment for seven years. A person would still be liable to the offence even if the gambling website is hosted overseas yet he/she engaged in its operation.

The general public are reminded not to engage in illegal gambling and money laundering of any sort.