

Police conduct anti-illegal gambling operation during UEFA EURO 2024

Police conducted a territory-wide anti-illegal gambling operation codenamed “CROWBEAK” cum “WINDSHIELD” during the UEFA EURO 2024 in June and July. During the operation, Police emphasised on both enforcement and education in tackling bookmaking and other illegal gambling activities, resulting in the arrest of 735 persons, seizure of over \$692 million betting records and over \$2.5 million in cash and assets.

In this operation, Police conducted a total of 165 raids, resulting in the arrest of 735 persons, including 499 males and 236 females aged between 18 and 74, for the offences of “engaging in bookmaking”, “betting with a bookmaker”, “operating illegal gambling establishments”, “dealing with property known or reasonably believed to representing proceeds of an indictable offence” (commonly known as “money laundering”), etc.

Police seized a total of \$1.1 million of suspected crime proceeds in cash and \$1.4 million worth of valuables, including luxurious watches and vehicles, suspected to represent crime proceeds. Officers also seized 12 computers and 95 mobile phones suspected to be engaging in bookmaking. The total betting records uncovered in the operation amounted to \$692 million.

On the education front, Police conducted a series of preventive education campaigns under the theme “Stay Away from Illegal Betting”, including:

- publicising anti-illegal gambling materials via media and electronic channels, including producing a promotional video (youtu.be/jUoCE2DGH04);
- broadcasting promotional videos and distributing leaflets and posters at entertainment premises and strategic locations; and
- working closely with the community, government departments and other organisations to strengthen the publicity effort of anti-illegal gambling messages through various channels.

Police appeal to the public that in accordance with the Gambling Ordinance (Cap. 148), anyone who bets with a bookmaker commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and nine months’ imprisonment on conviction. Anyone who engages in bookmaking, or promotes or facilitates bookmaking, commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$5 million and seven years’ imprisonment on conviction. A person would still be liable to the offences even if the gambling website is hosted overseas yet he/she engaged in its operation in Hong Kong.