

Hong Kong Customs and Police detect suspected cigarette smuggling case in joint operation (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs and Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) yesterday (January 10) mounted joint anti-smuggling operations at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port and detected a suspected smuggling case involving a cross-boundary private car. A total of about 110 000 suspected illicit cigarettes, with a total estimated market value of about \$390,000 and a duty potential of about \$280,000, were seized. A 38-year-old man was arrested during the operation.

Through risk assessment and intelligence exchange, Customs officers and Police officers intercepted an inbound private car, declared to be empty, at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port last night. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes at the passenger seat, rear seat and the boot of the private car. Police also discovered that the vehicle was suspected of using a forged vehicle registration mark. At the same time, the male driver failed the Rapid Oral Fluid Test.

The male driver was subsequently arrested for importing unmanifested cargo, using false instrument and drug driving, whereas the cross-boundary private car was also detained for further investigation.

Customs will continue to combat cross-boundary smuggling activities with firm enforcement action based on risk assessment and intelligence analysis.

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

Customs reminds members of the public that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Additionally, under Cap. 374 the Road Traffic Ordinance, any person found guilty of, with intent to deceive forges, or alters, or uses, or lends to or allows to be used by any other person, a document or other thing to which this subsection applies is liable to a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for 3 years.

Police reiterates that using a false instrument is a serious offence, any person found guilty of making use of the offence of using a false instrument is liable to imprisonment. Police will continue to conduct stringent enforcement actions against related traffic offences to safeguard

road safety.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

