

Hong Kong Customs detects money laundering case involving about \$61 million following narcotics investigation

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (May 22) detected a suspected money laundering case involving about \$61 million in crime proceeds subsequent to a follow-up investigation of a dangerous drug case identified last year. Two local women and one local man suspected to be connected with the case were arrested.

In October last year, Customs detected a dangerous drug case involving about \$1.9 million worth of drugs and arrested two local persons suspected to be connected with the case. A subsequent financial investigation and fund-flow analysis revealed that there were numerous suspicious transactions, which were suspected to be crime proceeds, in the personal bank accounts of one of the arrestees. Meanwhile, the investigation also revealed that a 55-year-old local woman and a 30-year-old local man transferred or received the suspected crime proceeds. During the period between January and December 2024, the total amount of the suspicious transactions handled by the three arrestees reached about \$61 million.

Upon further investigation, Customs arrested the 55-year-old local woman and 30-year-old local man yesterday for "dealing with property known or reasonably believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offenses" (commonly known as money laundering) under the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (OSCO) and searched their residential premises in Ho Man Tin and Tung Chung. Three mobile phones were seized in the operation. On the same day, Customs officers also further arrested a 63-year-old local woman who has been remanded due to the related drug trafficking case, for money laundering.

Two of the arrested persons have been released on bail pending investigation, while one arrested person continues to be remanded in custody. The investigation of the case is still ongoing, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Under the OSCO, a person commits an offence if he or she deals with any property knowing or having reasonable grounds to believe that such property, in whole or in part, directly or indirectly represents any person's proceeds of an indictable offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and imprisonment for 14 years while the crime proceeds are also subject to confiscation.

Members of the public may report any suspected money laundering activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form

(eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002) .