

# Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \$44 million (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (April 22) seized about 16 million suspected illicit cigarettes in Yuen Long with an estimated market value of about \$44 million and a duty potential of about \$30 million.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted in Pat Heung, Yuen Long, yesterday evening, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes inside a fenced area and a container. Seven men, aged between 23 and 45, suspected to be in connection with the case were arrested. Customs believes that a suspected illicit cigarette storehouse was raided during the operation.

An investigation is ongoing. Customs will continue to trace the source and the flow of the illicit cigarettes. The likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Customs has so far seized about 150 million suspected illicit cigarettes this year, a figure that is about 75 per cent of last year's total seizure amount.

Customs will continue its multi-pronged enforcement approach to combat illicit cigarette activities on all fronts, including cross-boundary smuggling, storage and distribution, as well as peddling of 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.

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](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

