

Hong Kong Customs special operation hits cross-boundary drug trafficking activities (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a special operation codenamed "Guardian" around the past summer holiday period at the airport, seaports and land boundary and railway control points to combat cross-boundary drug trafficking activities through passenger and cargo channels.

The 70-day operation started on July 1 and concluded on September 8. A total of 163 dangerous drug cases were detected and about 334.4 kilograms of different kinds of suspected dangerous drugs with an estimated market value of about \$126 million were seized. Fifty-four persons were arrested as a result.

Aged between 15 and 76, the arrested persons comprised 43 men and 11 women. The seizures included cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, ecstasy, ketamine and cannabis.

Around 78 per cent of the 163 cases, or 127 cases, occurred at Hong Kong International Airport. Apart from taking circuitous routes, drug syndicates also adopted different concealment methods in their attempts to evade Customs officers' attention. Drugs were found concealed inside body cavities, food packages, laminated photo albums, accessories and suitcase false compartments. Liquefied drugs were also found soaked in towels and filled inside wine bottles.

Customs today (September 10) described the special operation as a success in dangerous drug interception and a true reflection of the department's long-established zero tolerance towards illicit drug activities.

Members of the public are reminded that they should never carry unknown items or luggage for other people and must not be fooled into thinking that food and beverage packing or luggage concealment tricks can help them escape detection.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Young people should especially pay attention to the fact that drug trafficking is a serious criminal offence irrespective of the quantity involved and ignorance offers no excuse. Criminal conviction will result in grave repercussions for their future and they should not take risks in the hope that they may not be caught.

Hong Kong Customs has all along striven to eliminate dangerous drug inflow through passenger and cargo channels through strategies of risk-

profiling and intelligence analysis. Apart from routine law enforcement action, the department will continue its special operations on a needs basis to strengthen efforts against dangerous drug trafficking activities.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



