

One man convicted and jailed for importing duty-not-paid cigarettes (with photos)

A 58-year-old man was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (May 30) for importing duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare it to Customs Officers, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO).

On June 17, 2024, Hong Kong Customs and the Hong Kong Police Force mounted joint anti-smuggling operations at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Port. Through risk assessment and intelligence analysis, officers of Customs and the Police intercepted an inbound private car at the HZMB Hong Kong Port on that day. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized 130 600 sticks of duty-not-paid cigarettes from the front and rear passenger seats and the boot of the vehicle. The 58-year-old male driver was subsequently arrested and the private car was also seized. The estimated market value of the cigarettes seized in the case was about \$590,000 and the duty potential was about \$430,000.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences.

Customs reminds members of the public that under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any person who imports, deals with, possesses, sells or buys illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Customs will continue to combat cross-boundary smuggling activities with firm enforcement action.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette 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).

