

Two incoming passengers convicted and jailed for possessing duty-not-paid cigarettes and importing alternative smoking products (with photos)

Two incoming male passengers were sentenced to five months, two weeks, and three days' imprisonment, and four months' imprisonment with a fine of \$1,000, at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts yesterday (June 3) and today (June 4) respectively for possessing duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare it to Customs Officers, as well as for importing alternative smoking products, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO) and the Import and Export Ordinance (IEO).

Customs officers intercepted two incoming male passengers, aged 41 and 20, at Hong Kong International Airport on February 23 and April 8 respectively. About 83 000 duty-not-paid cigarettes and 24 000 alternative smoking products, with an estimated market value of about \$434,000 and a duty potential of about \$275,000 in total, were seized from their personal baggage. They were subsequently arrested.

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

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.

Under the IEO, any person who imports an alternative smoking product into Hong Kong commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

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).

