



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**

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15 September 2017

Two individuals will be charged in court for fraudulently obtaining GST tourist refund

Two former Singapore Customs officers (“the accused persons”) who allegedly fraudulently obtained Goods and Services Tax (“GST”) tourist refunds under the electronic tourist refund scheme (“eTRS”) will be charged in Court on 15 Sep 2017.

Singapore Customs and the Commercial Affairs Department of the Singapore Police Force were alerted to the case and commenced a joint investigation with IRAS. As of March 2015, the accused persons were no longer employed by Singapore Customs.

Modus Operandi of the GST Fraud

Investigations revealed that at the material time, the accused persons were former Singapore Customs officers deployed at the GST Refund Inspection Counter at Changi Airport. Their main duty was to process GST refund claims made by tourists leaving Singapore. In the course of their work, the accused persons would be presented with claims for GST refunds from tourists. The accused persons would reject some of these tourists’ claims. When the opportunity arose, they would take the details of these GST refund claims and use the eTRS computer system to process the GST refund into their own credit card or credit cards that were under their control. One of the accused persons then used the GST tourist refunds to repay credit card debts.

One of the accused persons will face 54 charges of fraudulently obtaining GST tourist refunds amounting to \$52,441.17. The other accused person will face 43 charges of fraudulently obtaining GST tourist refunds amounting to \$16,015.86 and 38 charges under section 47(1)(c) of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act, for using the fraudulently obtained GST tourist refunds amounting to \$10,553. The fraud was committed between 2011 and 2014.

Zero Tolerance towards Tax Fraud, Money Laundering and other Criminal Activities

Singapore has always adopted a zero tolerance approach towards tax fraud, money laundering and other criminal activities. The authorities take a serious view of such criminal practices and will take swift action against any individuals and parties involved.

Anyone who commits the offence of wilful intent to obtain fraudulent GST refunds shall be liable on conviction a penalty of up to 3 times the amount of refund wrongfully obtained and a fine not exceeding \$10,000, and/or imprisonment of up to 7 years. Anyone who commits a money laundering offence of acquiring, possessing or using the benefits from criminal conduct under section 47(1)(c) of the CDSA shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$500,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years or to both.

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