



## **SINGAPORE CUSTOMS AND CORRUPT PRACTICES INVESTIGATION BUREAU**

### **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

22 March 2018

### **Syndicate leader sentenced to five years and eight months' imprisonment and \$30m fine for smuggling duty-unpaid cigarettes and bribing Certis CISCO senior protection officer**

The leader of a cigarette smuggling syndicate was sentenced by the State Courts on 22 March 2018 to five years and three months' imprisonment and a fine of \$30 million for masterminding a plan to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes out of the Jurong Port into Singapore, and another five months' imprisonment for bribing a Certis CISCO senior protection officer.

Mok Chee Kin (莫志坚), a 50-year-old stateless person, was found guilty of six charges under the Customs Act, and two charges under Section 6(b) read with Section 29(a) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, Chapter 241.

As Mok did not pay the court fine, he will serve another 30 months of default imprisonment, bringing the total imprisonment term to five years and 38 months.

This is the highest sentence handed down by the State Courts for duty-unpaid cigarette offences since October 2014. On 3 October 2014, another offender was sentenced to three years and six months' imprisonment and a \$14 million fine for dealing in duty-unpaid cigarettes.

Mok, a repeat offender, is liable to an enhanced punishment under the Customs Act, which includes a mandatory jail term of up to six years, as well as a heavier fine of no less than 30 times the duty or Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded. He had been sentenced six years ago, on 15 August 2011, to seven months' imprisonment for dealing in duty-unpaid cigarettes.

On 30 March 2016, Singapore Customs officers conducted an operation in the vicinity of the Jurong Port.

The officers were looking out for a white truck, which was suspected to be used to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes out of the port. Upon sighting the truck at a carpark, the officers moved in to conduct a check and uncovered a total of 10,500 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the truck. The total duty and GST evaded amounted to about \$898,600 and \$87,230 respectively.

Investigations revealed that a 36-year-old Singaporean truck driver, Devinderan Arajinan, was recruited by Mok to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes out of the Jurong Port. In November 2015, Mok met Devinderan and another man, 31-year-old Singaporean, Lee Helmi Iskandar Bin Rosli, to devise a smuggling plan.

Mok would place orders for the cigarettes to be shipped from Batam, Indonesia, to the Jurong Port. Mok instructed Lee, who was familiar with the shipping process as he had worked in various logistics companies, to receive the shipments of duty-unpaid cigarettes at the port.

Mok also instructed Devinderan to collect the duty-unpaid cigarettes at the port and deliver them to other parts of Singapore.

To avoid checks when driving the truck carrying duty-unpaid cigarettes out of the port, Devinderan introduced a 27-year-old Malaysian man, Rajeswaran Sandra, to Mok. Rajeswaran made arrangements with a Certis CISCO senior protection officer not to conduct checks on the truck that Devinderan was driving. Mok agreed to pay the officer, through Rajeswaran, each time he assisted Devinderan in smuggling the duty-unpaid cigarettes out of the Jurong Port.

Mok was found guilty of abetment by engaging in a conspiracy with Rajeswaran and Devinderan to give the Certis CISCO senior protection officer gratification amounting to a total of \$4,500 as a reward for facilitating the smuggling of duty-unpaid cigarettes out of the Jurong Port on 16 and 23 March 2016.

Lee and Devinderan were arrested on 31 March 2016, while Rajeswaran and Mok were arrested on 5 and 24 April 2016 respectively.

Lee, Devinderan and Rajeswaran, were sentenced to 36 months' jail each by the State Courts between November 2016 and February 2017 for their various roles in smuggling duty-unpaid cigarettes. Lee was also sentenced to a fine of \$5,000 for his duty-unpaid cigarette offence. Devinderan and Rajeswaran were sentenced to an additional three months' jail each for their corruption offences.

Singapore adopts a zero tolerance approach towards corruption and other criminal acts. The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau takes a serious view of any corrupt practices and will not hesitate to take action against any party involved in such acts.

Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing in duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act. Offenders will be severely dealt with. They can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years.

Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

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## ANNEX



Singapore Customs officers conducted an operation in the vicinity of the Jurong Port on 30 March 2016. They recovered a total of 10,500 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes from a white truck.



Investigations revealed that Mok instructed Devinderan to collect the duty-unpaid cigarettes at the Jurong Port and deliver them to other parts of Singapore.



To avoid checks when Devinderan drove the truck carrying duty-unpaid cigarettes out of the Jurong Port, Mok agreed to pay a Certis CISCO senior protection officer, through Rajeswaran, for not conducting checks on the truck that Devinderan was driving.

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