

FOLLOWING THE MONEY TRAIL OF THE ILLICIT WILDLIFE TRADE

Convergence of maritime trade chain efforts
and financial crime investigations

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21 June 2022
3:00 PM HK / SGT

Photo Credits: Smuggled Tiger Cub © WWF / James Morgan

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Customs Role in Fighting Illegal Wildlife Trade

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CUSTOMS ROLE IN FIGHTING AGAINST WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING



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Operation Mekong Dragon III (2021)



Operation Mekong Dragon III

Operation Mekong Dragon (OMD) was borne from the recognized need for a joint regional operation against drugs and chemical precursor trafficking. It was initiated in 2018 by Viet Nam and China Customs administrations with support provided by the World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO AP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The illicit drug market in Southeast Asia has undergone a profound transformation with a steep increase in the manufacture of synthetic drugs, especially methamphetamine. At the same time, heroin and cocaine continues to be the frequently trafficked drugs in East and Southeast Asia. Moreover, the massive scale of wildlife trafficking in the region has emerged as a major problem in recent years. To dismantle the illicit trade of drugs and endangered wildlife species, 20 Member administrations, RILO AP, UNODC, and 3 other law enforcement agencies participated to enhance

Operation Mekong Dragon II (2020)



RILO Asia / Pacific
World Customs Organization

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Operation Mekong Dragon

In the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), methamphetamine production and trafficking as well as the opium poppy cultivation are expending market demand for illicit drugs remains high. The diversion and trafficking of precursor chemicals and the emergence of new synthetic drugs also a challenge.

With the drugs problems arising, each nation in GMS realized that the problem could not be handled independent of one another. In view of the above background and needs, China Customs and Vietnam Customs proposed Operation Mekong Dragon in coordination with RILO AP. Customs administrations in the GMS are invited to participate, including customs agencies from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. And Korea Customs Service, as the host of RILO AP, might be invited as an observer to take part in some activities of the Operation, if applicable.

Within the limits of the law of each country, the objective of Operation Mekong Dragon is to enhance information and intelligence exchange and cooperative enforcement efforts amongst customs across the GMS to prevent and intercept illegal cross-border movements of drugs and precursor chemicals.



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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Southeast Asia and Pacific

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East and Southeast Asia customs authorities announce results against drug and wildlife trafficking during the pandemic



Credit: China Customs

Seizure of pangolin scales in China

See also:

- More about Wildlife and forest crime

Bangkok (Thailand), 5 November 2020 - A recently concluded joint operation among countries in Asia, the UNODC and the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office Asia Pacific (RILO-AP) of the World Customs Organization (WCO) has resulted in the disruption of criminal networks, as well as insights into the methods used to overcome COVID related border restrictions and transportation limitations.

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TRADE & SUPPLY CHAIN FINANCE PROGRAM





World Customs Organization




World Customs Organization





Operation Thunder2021



World Customs Organization
Organisation mondiale des douanes

English : English

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NEWSROOM

2022

2021

December

November

October


September

Global arrests and seizures Operation Thunder 2021 strikes trafficking networks

30 November 2021

A worldwide enforcement operation against wildlife and timber trafficking, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and INTERPOL has disrupted...

Codenamed Thunder 2021, the month-long (1-31 October) operation involved intelligence units and wildlife and forestry enforcement agencies from 110 participating countries since the inception of the...



Operation Thunder2021

Operation THUNDER 2021 Tackling illegal wildlife crime



118 countries



300 offenders apprehended

1,002 seizures of wildlife and forestry products, including:



478 kg ivory pieces and
487 kg ivory-derived products



1,4 million plant-derived items



856 kg pangolin scales



75 big cat parts, 29 live big cats



531 turtles and tortoises



336 live reptiles



4,843 kg marine products,
including corals



75,320 kg timber,
including 313m³ of rosewood



171 live birds



Operation Thunder2021



Operation Thunder2020



Who we are Crimes How we work

Wildlife and forestry crime: Worldwide seizures in global INTERPOL-WCO

9 November 2020

Home > News and Events > News > 2020 > Wildlife and forestry crime: Worldwide seizures in global INTERPOL-WCO operation

Coordinated by INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO), Operation Thunder 2020 rallied 103 countries against environmental crime.

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NEWSROOM

2021

2020

December

November

October

September

August

July

June

May

April

Wildlife and forestry crime: Worldwide seizures in global WCO-INTERPOL operation

09 November 2020

Coordinated by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and **INTERPOL**, Operation Thunder 2020 rallied 103 countries against wildlife and forestry crime.

A month-long customs and police cross border operation, from 14 September to 11 October 2020, led to large seizures of protected wildlife and forestry specimens and products, triggering arrests and investigations worldwide.

Focusing on pre-identified routes and hotspots, Operation Thunder 2020 resulted in over 2,000 seizures of wildlife and forestry products. In total, 699 offenders were apprehended and at least one INTERPOL Red Notice has already been requested based on information gained during the Operation. Further arrests and prosecutions are foreseen as ongoing investigations progress.

Participating countries focused on particularly vulnerable species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international agreement aimed at ensuring international trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Worldwide impact

Operation Thunder 2020



Operation Thunder 2020



*Update of legislation in several countries and regions

*Cooperation between industries and law enforcement

THANK YOU

Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific

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