



Vehicle Smuggling Syndicate

While globalization has expanded international trade, it has similarly broadened the range of organized crime.

Syndicates are becoming more sophisticated in exploiting the supply chain and manipulating the trade system. Rapid technological advances have further injected a cyberspace dimension that complicates transnational enforcement, making it easier for criminal masterminds to orchestrate operations across various locations remotely.

Smuggling Syndicate

Evidence is being gathered by the Fiji Revenue and Customs (FRCS) in what is beginning to look like a highly connected network of individuals working within the country with intent to make money from proceeds of criminal activity. A thorough investigation is underway to establish whether a syndicate of such nature exists and the people behind it.

Vehicle Smuggling

An Importer in the Western Division is under investigation for allegedly smuggling four (4) Hilux vehicles into the country from overseas. These vehicles were imported between 2016 to 2019. Information has been ascertained that these vehicles were either reported stolen or were written off overseas thus the importation of this vehicles are prohibited under the Customs laws. The Revenue and Customs is also investigating two other suspected prohibited vehicle imports into the country.

Alteration and Tempering

FRCS is also investigating the fact that the vehicle frame or chassis numbers were altered and given a new look to conceal the alleged smuggling racket. All four vehicles have been detained by FRCS pending legal proceeding. Information received indicates that the vehicles came in a consignment marked as spare parts without any declaration of the vehicles.

Collaborative Approach

The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service sought the assistance from Ministries, Private Sector Companies and the Australian Federal Police and Customs, New Zealand Police and NZ Customs to investigate this matter. We realize that Border Security is a serious business and a collaborative approach should be taken with both local border agencies and international Customs Administrations globally to crack down on illegal activities. Under our Customs to Customs Cooperation arrangements intelligence sharing has intensified and we no longer work in isolation.

While the Service is committed to facilitate trade, be rest assured that with the processes, systems and partnerships in place at the Border we will detect illegal activities.

Charges and Penalties

FRCS has laid charges against the Importer and the people involved in the racket. Under section 139 (c) of the Customs Act, any person who unlawfully and with guilty intent imports any prohibited or restricted import; or unlawfully and with guilty intent exports any prohibited or restricted export, is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding 3 times the value of the goods or \$25,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 10 years, or both and the goods, if any, which are the subject matter of the offence are liable to forfeiture.

FRCS staff implicated- sent home

During the process of investigations, two FRCS staff were also implicated as colluding to facilitate this illegal import. The Service has terminated their employment contracts instantaneously and is pursuing criminal prosecution.

Intel Information through whistleblower

FRCS is grateful to credible Intelligence information received from the public in regards to the above smuggling case which led to the investigation and detention of vehicles. Members of the public are encouraged to report any Customs or Tax evasions or any unprofessional conduct by simply emailing to Chief Executive Officer on ceo@frcs.org.fj or a letter addressed to him or you can also report it in person.

Taxpayers can also directly call the Revenue and Customs Chief Executive Officer Mr. Visvanath Das on 9907740 to lodge complaints or our Chief Investigations Officer Mr. Rajas Swamy on 9980489. The Revenue & Customs is here to administer the Tax and Customs laws

and it is our duty to ensure fairness and consistency in the application of the law to ensure that we are creating a level playing field for all taxpayers.

Enhancing Trade and Identifying risks

With the new waves of digital innovation emerging, FRCS has developed a common digital platform across the customs supply chain and uses ASYCUDA World which is a fully integrated Customs management information system which handles every step in the customs process, from pinpointing high-risk consignments for inspection to processing payments to release and delivery of the goods.

This new digital platform is accessible by the entire trade ecosystem as well as third party service providers. It has increased efficiency in the Customs clearance process and monitor international trade transactions and the production of Customs and trade statistics. It has also greatly benefited taxpayers as well as the nation and this automated program also reduces administrative costs for the trading businesses to a minimum.

With this ASYCUDA system we are able to provide actionable insights to pre-emptively tackle fraud and risk to promote legitimate trade and also create more personalized experiences for our users.

For more information please email us on info@frcs.org.fj