

Crime Stoppers: Sale of Illegal Cigarettes is Funding Bikers, Street Gangs and Terrorists

Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers Launches Hard-Hitting Public Awareness Campaign

TORONTO – Monday, September 18, 2017 – Today, Crime Stoppers programs across Ontario officially launched a province-wide public awareness campaign to highlight the threats to our communities posed by the sale of illegal cigarettes. The campaign features a series of 30-second radio and print advertisements designed to show how the purchase of illegal cigarettes is helping fund organized crime and terrorist activities.

Link to download campaign: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5t1vx44mrfhwm9q/AAC6fvDpgqgzYhDILoaDYfsBa?dl=0>

According to the RCMP and other police organizations, organized crime is extensively involved in the illegal tobacco market and criminal gangs are using profits from the sale of contraband tobacco to fund a number of other illegal activities, including guns, drugs and human trafficking.

The illegal activity of contraband tobacco has also been linked to funding for terrorist groups, according to INTERPOL, the world's largest international police organization. A report published in 2016 by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute titled, "Smoking Gun: Strategic Containment Of Contraband Tobacco And Cigarette Trafficking In Canada", showed that criminal investigations in the US have directly linked those involved in the illegal tobacco trade to terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas and al Qaeda.

The sale of contraband tobacco is a growing problem in Ontario. An estimated one in three cigarettes purchased in the province is illegal. In many Northern Ontario communities, the problem is much worse, with illegal cigarettes making up more than 60% of all cigarette purchases.

"This awareness campaign is designed to remind Ontarians that contraband tobacco is illegal for a reason: the sale of these products help fund organized crime, serving to make our communities less safe," says Sean Sportun, ISCP, Director of Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers.

Sportun adds "Given the close connection between illegal cigarettes and its funding of criminal activity in our communities, it's important to educate and empower members of the community to safely make a difference by calling Crime Stoppers. We offer guaranteed anonymity and cash rewards for tips on all criminal activity, including contraband or illegal tobacco."

To learn more, please visit: www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca

About Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers is a civilian, non-profit, charitable organization that brings together members of the community, the police services and the media in the fight against crime. Crime Stoppers provides citizens with a vehicle to anonymously supply the police with information about a crime or potential crime of which they have knowledge. Cash rewards are offered to people who call the program with information that leads to an arrest.

To hear the Public Service Ads (PSAs), click on the links below:

Biker Bake Sale



CSCC-008-7R30E
Biker Bake Sale FULL

Car Wash for Street Gangs



CSCC-001-7R30E
Car Wash for Street

Almonds for Terrorists



CSCC-015-7R30E
Almonds for Terroris

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For more information, please contact:

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