



**WCO**  
**AML-CTF**  
**Operational**  
**Activities and**  
**Project TENTACLE**

**Technical Attaché David Kane**  
**[david.kane@wcoomd.org](mailto:david.kane@wcoomd.org)**





# Summary of WCO AML/CTF Efforts and Operational Activities in 2018 & 2019

- Capacity Building Efforts:
  - WCO Regional AML/CTF Workshop for East and Southern Africa, Lusaka, Zambia (January 2018)
  - WCO Regional AML/CTF Workshop for Asia Region, Sydney, Australia (March 2018)
  - WCO Regional AML/CTF Workshop for Asia Region, Kashiwa, Japan (January 2019)



# Summary of WCO AML/CTF Operational Activities 2017 to 2019

- Operational Efforts:
  - Operation TRIGGER III – INTERPOL-led, WCO supported operation in West and Central African regions to identify and seize smuggled firearms, ammunition and currency (2017)
  - Operation TRIGGER MENA – INTERPOL-led, WCO supported (2018)
  - Operation NEPTUNE – INTERPOL-led, WCO supported operation targeting terrorists, terrorist supporters and currency smuggling in the Mediterranean region, via ferry services (2018)
    - Italy, Spain, France, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria



# Summary of WCO AML/CTF Operational Activities 2017 to 2019

- Operational Efforts:
  - Operation MAHARLIKA II – INTERPOL-led, WCO supported operation targeting terrorists, smuggled currency and pre-cursor chemicals
    - Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia
  - Operation NEPTUNE II – INTERPOL-led operation targeting terrorists, terrorist supporters and currency smuggling in the Mediterranean region, via ferry services (Italy, Spain, France, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria)
    - Frontex also participated in this operation



# Operation TENTACLE

WCO-led, INTERPOL supported operation targeting the smuggling of bulk currency and TBML via gems/gold

- 25 August to 6 October 2019
- Pan-Asia operation, as well as the United States (Homeland Security Investigations)



# Operation TENTACLE

Operation involving 19 Customs Services

INTERPOL Headquarters

INTERPOL National Central Bureaus

FIU Japan (workshop-Kashiwa)



# Operation TENTACLE

CENcomm Platform utilized for all communications and seizure/interdiction information

24/7 accessibility

Australian Border Force manned the Operational Control Unit (OCU) in Melbourne and, along with the WCO Compliance & Enforcement Sub-directorate, conducted all analysis of the events and seizures, kept track of all statistics and was responsible for post-seizure follow-up efforts



Over \$5 million (USD) of currency and gold/gems, combined, were interdicted or seized during the operation

\$3,740,000 (USD) in currency

28.5 kilograms of gold (estimated value of \$1,310,000 USD)

93 gemstones valued at \$26,727 (USD)

\$2,700 in counterfeit in 100 USD notes









Indian Customs seized **USD \$557,095** in cash from six Bangladeshi travelers departing from **Kolkata International Airport**. The subjects were traveling from Kolkata to Dhaka.

On examination, the passengers were found to be in possession of undeclared excess US (215,800), CAD (275,000) and INR (320,000) notes in checked luggage. The notes were wrapped in packages of brown tape and concealed inside the lining of the suitcase. India Customs investigators responded to arrest the travelers and seize the money.

Prosecution is pending.





New Zealand Customs Service detected **USD \$152,745** in undeclared cash on a 34 year-old, Chinese-born Australian female departing **Auckland International Airport** for Sydney. The passenger was travelling with a 27 year-old female Chinese.

The passenger was found to be in possession of undeclared excess NZ notes found in carry-on luggage, and three watches purchased at the duty free store, with a combined value of NZD \$87,000. NZCS responded to arrest the passenger and seize the cash and watches. New Zealand Customs and Australian investigations are ongoing.



Australian Border Force detected **USD \$122,807** in undeclared cash carried by an Australian male national traveling on VA83, departing **Sydney International Airport**. The subject was travelling with an Australian male co-traveller.

The subjects were traveling from Sydney to Hong Kong. On examination of checked luggage, the passenger was found to be in possession of undeclared excess AUD notes. The cash was concealed **inside vacuum sealed magazines**. Australian Federal Police responded to seize the cash. Investigations are ongoing.





## **Gold internally concealed on a passenger / gold paste**

Sri Lankan Customs seized **1.161 kg in undeclared gold** in the possession of a Bangladeshi female and female co-traveller departing **Colombo's Bandaranayake International Airport Sri Lanka**. The passengers were attempting to depart to Chennai, India.

Upon examination, passengers were found to be in possession of eight red pellets of “semi liquid” gold paste weighing 1.13kg. The pellets were wrapped in black electrical tape and carbon paper and carried in their hand luggage. The passengers were also subject to body scanning, where one passenger was found to be concealing a 31g solid gold ingot, internally.

Investigation by Sri Lankan Customs is ongoing.







Japan Customs detected 3 gold bars concealed in **hollowed-out paper bundles, with the gold bars placed between bills of 10,000 yen notes**. Japanese Customs inspected the offender as a routine inspection. The inspecting officer noticed the unusual weight of the plastic case. The detailed inspection uncovered the gold inside the bundle of notes.

The gold bars and 10,000 in JPY notes were seized by Japan Customs. The investigation is ongoing.







United States Customs and Border Protection (US CBP) seized **USD \$95,552 cash** on a 62 year-old Chinese female. On arrival into **Newark Liberty International Airport** from Beijing, China the passenger was subjected to real-time assessment by CBP officers. Baggage examination found the passenger to be in possession of seven bundles of undeclared USD (\$30,000) and JPY notes (5,140,000) with four bundles in her checked luggage, three bundles in a worn fanny pack. The notes were concealed in tightly wrapped packing tape, paper, plastic and carbon paper.

USCBP seized the cash and then contacted the DHS agency responsible for currency smuggling and trade-based money laundering investigations, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). The investigation is ongoing.





# Project TENTACLE



The WCO has recently received the support of the United States Department of State (DoS) Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to tackle currency smuggling, trade-based money laundering

The WCO and DoS combined their efforts to identify priority regions around the globe that are being exploited by transnational criminal and terrorist groups to launder their illicit funds by moving them across international borders in various forms



# Project TENTACLE



DoS INL and the WCO Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-terrorism Financing Unit created **PROJECT TENTACLE**

DoS-INL provided WCO with funding for a **two-year AML/CTF project** to conduct both **capacity building workshops** and to **promote operational coordination** to attack the phenomenon of bulk cash smuggling and gem and precious metal smuggling across international borders, as well as to target corrupt commercial zones around the world



# Project TENTACLE



The WCO will establish a cadre of certified AML/CTF experts to conduct the capacity building workshops in the Asia, Africa and Latin America regions over the course of the next two-years (2020 and 2021)

Two (2) workshops and coordinated operational efforts will be put in place by the WCO in 2020 and three (3) in 2021.

The non-nominal operational data will be maintained in the **FinCRIME On-line Library** for intelligence development





Questions???

Technical Attaché David Kane  
[david.kane@wcoomd.org](mailto:david.kane@wcoomd.org) +32 2 209 9329

