



For Immediate Release

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EIGHTEEN ARRESTED, 128 BURNERS SEIZED IN HONG KONG ORGANIZED CRIME RAID

100,000 Pirated Discs Seized in Raid on 10 Locations

Hong Kong, Encino – On August 4, following a year-long investigation, the Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department raided 10 premises in Hong Kong connected to an illegal optical disc burning syndicate controlled by an organized criminal gang, arresting 18 men and women and seizing 128 DVD-R and CD-R burners.

The pirate operation was run by the Hong Kong-based Wo Shing Wo triad society, a crime syndicate known to derive significant income from illegal gambling operations.

In a synchronized sweep, 150 officers from Hong Kong Customs' Special Task Force (STF) raided 10 locations in Hong Kong's Mong Kok, Kowloon Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, Cheung Sha Wan, Kwai Chung and Yuen Long Districts, neutralizing a DVD-R/CD-R burning lab, two warehouses and three pirate retail outlets.

The officers seized 88 DVD-R burners, 40 CD-R burners and 100,000 pirated optical discs infringing MPA member company titles and computer and video game software. Hong Kong Customs officials estimated that the 128 seized burners were in operation 24 hours a day and capable of producing 11,473,920 pirated optical discs in a year, yielding revenues of just over US\$8,649,570 (HK\$67,466,650).

The 18 suspects, six men and 12 women aged 18 to 46, included 14 non-Hong Kong residents from mainland China. All the suspects will be charged with copyright offenses, and the ringleader, a 36-year-old Hong Kong man known to be a Wo Shing Wo member, will be charged with organized crime offenses under Hong Kong's Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (OSCO).

"This successful raid, following a year-long investigation, underscores the determination of the Hong Kong government and its law enforcement agencies to stamp out copyright piracy, which has become a favored source of income for organized criminal groups," said Mike Ellis, senior vice president and regional director, Asia-Pacific for the Motion Picture Association. "The continued outstanding efforts of the Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department send a clear message that Hong Kong is committed to the fight against intellectual property theft."

The MPA will provide support for the prosecution of this case.

Piracy in Asia

The MPA estimates that its member companies lose an excess of US\$896 million in potential revenue annually in the Asia-Pacific region alone. In 2004, the MPA operations in the Asia-Pacific region investigated more than 25,500 cases of piracy and assisted law enforcement officials in conducting nearly 12,000 raids. These activities resulted in the seizure of approximately 49,000,000 illegal optical discs, and the initiation of more than 8,000 legal actions.

About the MPA: *The Motion Picture Association (MPA) represents the interests of major motion picture companies in the global marketplace. On behalf of its Member Companies, the MPA conducts investigations around the world, assists with the criminal and civil litigation generated by such cases, and conducts education outreach programs to teach movie fans around the world about the harmful effects of piracy. The MPA directs its worldwide anti-piracy operations from its headquarters based in Encino, California and has regional offices located in Brussels (Europe, Middle East and Africa), Mexico City (Latin America), Montreal (Canada) and Hong Kong (Asia-Pacific). The MPA's anti-piracy activities have helped to transform entire markets from pirate to legitimate, benefiting video distributors, retailers, and foreign and local filmmakers alike. The MPA Member Companies include: Buena Vista International, Inc.; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc.; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Releasing International Corporation; Twentieth Century Fox International Corporation; Universal International Films, Inc.; and Warner Bros. Pictures International, a division of Warner Bros. Pictures Inc.*

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