IFA©T-GC

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION AGAINST COPYRIGHT THEFT – GREATER CHINA

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HEAVY SENTENCES, ASSETS SEIZED AT CONCLUSION OF TRIAD-RUN PIRATE OPTICAL DISC LAB CASE

Mastermind Jailed for Over Six Years, US$128,000 of Assets Seized

Hong Kong – Yesterday saw the conclusion of a three year investigation and prosecution of organized crime gang members arrested for the mass production and retailing of pirated movies and computer software. Three members of the gang were convicted and sentenced to prison for periods ranging from 31 months to six years and six weeks.

The arrests in this case were made on August 4, 2005, following a year-long investigation by the Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department. 10 premises in Hong Kong were raided, all connected to the illegal optical disc burning syndicate controlled by the Hong Kong-based Wo Shing Wo triad society.

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. 18 men and women were arrested while seizures included 128 DVD-R and 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, if put into operation 24 hours a day, were capable of producing over 11 million pirated optical discs in a year, yielding revenues of over US$8.5 million (HK$67,466,650).

The 18 arrested, six men and 12 women aged 18 to 46, included 14 non-Hong Kong residents from mainland China. Other members of the operation were convicted and sentenced earlier and the sentencing of the three yesterday, including the ringleader, 38-year-old Hong Kong resident Chan Cheong-kit, brings the case to its conclusion. The three were convicted at Hong Kong's District Court under Hong Kong's Copyright Ordinance and Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (OSCO).

Assistant Commissioner (Intelligence and Investigation) of Customs and Excise Department, Mr. Y. K. Tam said "This is one of a number of cases involving the theft of copyright where we have sought to invoke the powers of the OSCO. These cases are resource-intensive, so it is encouraging to see that the Court shared our view of the seriousness of the offences involved in this case. Profit is the only motivation for piracy trade and Hong Kong Customs and Excise is committed to seeking asset forfeiture in every case where profits can be identified and seized."

"IFA©T-GC, and the rights holders we represent, are grateful to the outstanding work done by Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department and the protection given by the Hong Kong courts," said Sam Ho, Executive Director and General Manager of IFA©T-GC. "The creative industries are one of the main drivers of economic growth and prosperity and in allocating the resources that allow such investigations and handing down deterrent sentences Hong Kong is showing its continued commitment to IPR protection, enhancing its role as a regional hub for the creative industries."

The successful convictions mean that Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department will now move to confiscate the US$128,000 worth of assets seized and frozen.

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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 Los Angeles, California and has regional offices located in Brussels (Europe, Middle East and Africa), São Paulo (Latin America), Montreal (Canada) and Singapore (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.; 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.*

About the IFA©T-GC: *The International Federation Against Copyright Theft was established in 2006 by the Motion Picture Association to protect the film industry in the Greater China region from the adverse impact of copyright theft. IFA©T-GC works closely with its members, government and enforcement authorities to protect the Greater China film and television industry, retailers and movie fans.*

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