IFA©T-GC

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION AGAINST COPYRIGHT THEFT – GREATER CHINA

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HONG KONG COURT SINKS PIRACY SYNDICATE

Eleven Imprisoned for Periods Ranging from 1 – 3 Years

Hong Kong – Eleven members of a criminal syndicate manufacturing and selling pirated movies, music, computer games and computer software were convicted and sentenced to prison for periods ranging from one to three years. The sentences marked the conclusion of an investigation and prosecution spanning three years and confirm Hong Kong's growing reputation as a risky place for pirates to ply their trade.

The arrests in the case were made in December 2005, when 80 Officers from Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department's Special Task Force conducted "Operation Explorer", smashing a notorious pirate syndicate based in Hong Kong's busy Mong Kok District. The officers raided an illegal burning lab, two burned disc storehouses and a shop, arresting 15 people for copyright offenses. Seizures included 68 DVD/CD burners and 46,742 burned discs containing pirated movies, music, computer software and games.

On June 2 and 4, 2007, Deputy District Court Judge R. Chan convicted 11 defendants under Hong Kong's Copyright Ordinance and Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (OSCO) and sentenced them to immediate imprisonment for periods ranging from 12 months to three years.

Optical disc burner labs offer a number of advantages to criminals engaging in piracy; costs are low, they are difficult to detect and allow inventory to be topped-up on a daily basis. They are very profitable, a conservative estimate puts this lab's production capacity at 3.2 million pirated optical discs in one year, yielding revenues of around US$5 million (HK$39,657,595).

"The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has just issued details of a report confirming piracy is a huge problem, which is growing ever worse and calling for stiffer penalties against the criminals involved in the theft of intellectual property" said Sam Ho, Executive Director and General Manager of IFA©T-GC. Ho continued "We are fortunate in Hong Kong that our Government, the criminal justice system and Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department are sending a clear message that Hong Kong is committed to the fight against intellectual property theft and that engaging in piracy here puts you at very real risk of being arrested, convicted and sent to prison."

This is the second case in the last two weeks where pirates were convicted and sentenced under the provisions of OSCO. May 30 saw the conclusion of a three year investigation and prosecution of organized crime gang members who were arrested for producing and

selling 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.

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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 supporters, government and enforcement authorities to protect the Greater China film and television industry, retailers and movie fans.*

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