



THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Road Block nets Illegal Cigarettes

Over 200,000 illegal cigarettes were seized at a roadblock outside Worcester on the N1 on 18 July 2013. The illegal Chicago and Manchester cigarettes were discovered when traffic authorities pulled over a Hyundai i10; finding all the cigarettes packed in the car.

Upon further investigation, authorities also discovered the invoices for the cigarettes to be incorrect. One suspect has been arrested for being in possession of non-compliant cigarettes as well as for not having the correct invoices for the stock.

The illegal cigarette trade has dramatically increased in the Western Cape since 2010. Research conducted by independent agencies suggests that 28% of all cigarettes sold in the Province are illegal. Brands such as Chicago make up a majority of the illicit problem in the Province and, according to media reports; these are frequently seized by authorities during raids. A large majority of illegal cigarettes make their way into the country via Zimbabwe, while a growing number is also manufactured locally.

According to Francois van der Merwe, Chairman of the Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa (TISA), the trade in illegal cigarettes is a major contributor to the broader illicit economy in the Western Cape. "Illegal cigarettes cost the economy billions of Rands each year in lost revenue and taxes. This is money that could be channelled to much needed services and infrastructure."

"Law enforcement officials are to be commended on their quick response as well as for their ongoing efforts to curb the illegal cigarette trade in the Province. We believe that a co-ordinated approach involving law enforcement officials both provincially and nationally together with officials from SACU

and SADC is necessary to tackle a growing illegal cigarette problem. TISA remains committed to working with all the relevant parties in efforts to eradicate the illegal trade in tobacco products,” concludes Van der Merwe.

Ends

Notes for the Editor

- SAPS Worcester Case number - CAS 603/7/13

Ends

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