



## THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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### **MEDIA STATEMENT**

***For Immediate Release  
6 September 2013***

#### **Illegal cigarettes seized in Cape Town**

Over a million illegal cigarettes were seized during an intervention in Cape Town on 4 September 2013 and moved by SARS to a state warehouse.

The Pacific brand of cigarettes was found by SAPS in a Khayelitsha house during the early hours of the morning. One suspect was arrested.

The suspect is alleged to have attempted to bribe the SAPS official which resulted in him being consequently arrested by the Lingeletu police.

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 and Pacific together make up approximately 90% of the illicit problem in the Province, and according to media reports, are frequently seized by authorities. A large majority of illegal cigarettes make their way into the country via Zimbabwe, while a growing number are 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, together with other commonly smuggled and counterfeit goods such as abalone, crayfish, clothing and apparel, are collectively costing 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-**

**Editor's Notes:**

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