

<http://www.interpol.int/public/news/2008/mamba20081029.asp>

Operation Mamba (IMPACT) – targeting counterfeit medicines in Tanzania and Uganda

29 October 2008

The first combined INTERPOL- World Health Organization (WHO) operations targeting counterfeit pharmaceutical products took place between 29 September and 5 October 2008 in Tanzania and Uganda. The operations formed part of the WHO's International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT).

Counterfeit medical products – the problem

Counterfeit medical products pose a major risk to public health and are becoming increasingly prevalent in all parts of the world, particularly in Africa.

High costs of legitimate drugs and inadequate controls mean that patients turn increasingly (knowingly or otherwise) to counterfeit drugs. At best, these substandard drugs are likely to be less effective, but they can also be harmful, even life-threatening. It is estimated that in Sub-Saharan Africa over one million people, the majority of whom are children under the age of five, die from malaria. Fake antimalarial drugs are believed to be a contributory factor in a significant number of these tragedies.

Simultaneous operations

Operation Mamba demonstrates the way in which multiple law enforcement agencies can be mobilized to achieve a common goal. Police, drugs and revenue authorities joined their respective forces in Uganda and Tanzania, with the aim of inspecting and confiscating counterfeit medicines.

In order to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations, INTERPOL and IMPACT delivered a two-day training course in each country in advance of the operation, to brief personnel on methods and procedures. An investigative guide

See also

▶ [INTERPOL counterfeit medical products training supports cross-agency efforts to combat organized crime in Africa \(02/10/08\)](#)



Counterfeit products seized from a warehouse in Uganda



Among the seizures were a range of medical and cosmetic products



The results of the Tanzanian operation are presented at a press conference

manual and aide-mémoire, produced by the Permanent Forum on International Pharmaceutical Crime, were also distributed.

Results and actions

In Tanzania 191 locations, including pharmacies, warehouses and illicit markets, were inspected resulting in the seizure of some 100 types of products. Among the confiscated drugs were anti-malarial, cardiac, anti-fungal, multivitamin, hormonal and skin medicines. Police closed four pharmacies and 18 drug shops (known as Duka la Dawa Baridis) found to be in breach of the law. A total of 44 police cases were opened.

Following raids on 45 establishments in Uganda, a total of 38 shops and pharmacies are being investigated for operating illegal businesses without the necessary licenses and controls. Unregistered medicines were confiscated and suspected counterfeit medicines were taken away for analysis.

Support from the World Health Organization

These are the first INTERPOL-led enforcement operations to take place in Africa within the framework of the WHO International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT).

IMPACT is a global coalition of stakeholders, created in 2006, that aims to develop international collaboration between WHO member states, international organizations, NGOs, law enforcement agencies and health professional groups. The aim is to raise awareness of the dangers of counterfeit medical products and to curb their manufacture and distribution.

INTERPOL's ongoing activities through OASIS-Africa

The catalyst for launching these significant enforcement operations is the INTERPOL OASIS-Africa programme, whose goals are to build capacity, develop infrastructure and support police operations in Africa. Operation Mamba is the first in a series of activities addressing transnational organized criminal attacks on intellectual property rights within the OASIS programme. These successes provide a firm platform to launch further operations in the future.

Similar investigations and checks on suspected products are ongoing and a public report will be available shortly.

<http://www.interpol.int/public/icpo/pressreleases/pr2008/pr200865.asp>

INTERPOL media release

17 November 2008



Police across Southeast Asia target counterfeit medicines in multi-agency operation

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – Police across Southeast Asia have made a series of arrests and seized fake drugs worth millions of dollars in an operation supported by INTERPOL, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

Under the framework of the WHO's International Medical Products Anti-counterfeiting Task Force (IMPACT) and coordinated by INTERPOL, Operation Storm targeted individuals and groups involved in the manufacture and distribution of four classes of counterfeit medicines identified as posing a significant public health risk – anti malaria, anti tuberculosis, anti-HIV and antibiotics, specifically those for pneumonia and child-related illnesses.

“Operation Storm will provide a blueprint for future actions in targeting this type of criminal activity which affects every corner of the globe,” said INTERPOL Secretary General, [Ronald K. Noble](#).

“Counterfeit medicines pose a significant threat to the health and safety of some of the most vulnerable members of society, and it is clear that only through a multi-agency response can we significantly disrupt the trade in fake drugs.”

The operation, which took place across Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, also provided a unique platform for collaboration between national police, customs, public health authorities, drug regulatory authorities, international organizations and the private sector.

During Operation Storm, which ran from 15 April to 15 September 2008, nearly 200 raids were carried out, resulting in 27 arrests and the seizure of more than 16 million pills with an estimated value of USD 6.6 million.

The results of the operation were announced at the start of the International Law Enforcement Training Seminar on Combating Counterfeit Drugs hosted by Cambodia. Opening the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Mr Sar Kheng said co-operation was key.

“No one state alone can fully succeed in fighting against the production and distribution of counterfeit drugs. We must exchange intelligence, share our

See also

[Opening speech by H.E. Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Cambodia](#)



Keynote participants at the International Law Enforcement Training Seminar on Combating Counterfeit Drugs.



Sharing intelligence among countries is key to fighting the production and distribution of counterfeit drugs, said Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng.



Operation Storm provides a blueprint for future actions in targeting counterfeit drugs, said INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble.

respective roles and responsibilities, particularly the source, transit and destination countries, in order to take the appropriate action to prevent and eliminate fake drugs," said Deputy Prime Minister Kheng.

A key part of Operation Storm was the provision of training to customs, drug regulatory agency and police officials to assist them in counterfeit identification and sample handling techniques.

<http://portal.interpol.int:1967/public/icpo/pressreleases/pr2008/pr200863.asp>

Illegal online medicine suppliers targeted in first international Internet day of action

The first international Internet day of action co-ordinated by the Permanent Forum on International Pharmaceutical Crime, INTERPOL and the World Health Organisation's (WHO) International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT), targeting the illegal online sale of medicines to the public has resulted in a series of arrests and the seizure of potentially harmful medicines in operations carried out around the world.



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Codenamed Pangea, the operation focused on those individuals behind Internet sites which illegally sell and supply unlicensed or prescription-only medicines claiming to treat a range of ailments.

While many countries have previously carried out individual law enforcement activities targeting 'Internet pharmacies', Wednesday's Operation Pangea was the first time that action was taken on an international scale, with participating countries including Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, the UK and the USA.

"Buying medicines from illegal and unregulated websites poses significant risks, not least that the buyer is putting their health in danger by taking drugs which have no guarantee of safety, quality or effectiveness," said Jean-Michel Louboutin, INTERPOL's Executive Director of Police Services.

"With counterfeit drugs also being sold by these 'internet pharmacies', these pills containing little or no active ingredient not only have potential long term detrimental consequences on the effectiveness of real medicines, the profits derived from these also are often directed towards organized crime."

"Operation Pangea is a clear demonstration that the international community is harnessing its efforts to ensure there is no anonymity or safety for those individuals engaged in supplying medicines illegally via the Internet," added Mr Louboutin.

Locations in each country were identified, with investigators visiting residential and commercial addresses relating to Internet sites believed to be selling unlicensed or prescription-only medicines claiming to treat conditions such as diabetes, obesity and hair loss.

Investigations in a number of countries are still ongoing, with the final results from Operation Pangea to be released upon their conclusion. For more information on individual activities and operations, please contact the national enforcement agencies in the countries concerned.

<http://www.interpol.int/public/news/2008/oasiscounterfeitmedic20081002.asp>

INTERPOL counterfeit medical products training supports cross-agency efforts to combat organized crime in Africa

02 October 2008

INTERPOL, supported by the World Health Organization International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force (IMPACT) has initiated a series of training sessions in Uganda and Tanzania to support cross-agency efforts to combat transnational organized criminals who systematically manufacture and distribute counterfeit medical products throughout Africa.

The first session, held in Kampala, Uganda from 18-19 September, opened by Mr Moses Sakira, Head of the INTERPOL National Central Bureau Kampala, was attended by 40 representatives from police, the national drug authorities and customs who received advice and training to assist them in investigating counterfeit medical product cases more effectively. Training was provided by facilitators and specialists from INTERPOL, the national police and drug authorities, and representatives from affected pharmaceutical companies. Each participant was also provided with a training manual specifically designed by the Permanent Forum on International Pharmaceutical Crime (PFIPC).



Dare-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, 22-23
September 2008

The second training session held in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania from 22-23 September was opened by Mr Robert Manumba, Head of Criminal Investigation of Tanzania Police and Ms Charrys Ugullum, Acting Head of Tanzania Food and Drug Authority. It was attended by 50 students from

police, National Food and Drug Authorities, Presidency Office, Fair Competition Commission, the Bureau of Standards, and the Office of Attorney General.

The training sessions mark the beginning of an INTERPOL-led enforcement operation under the umbrella of the World Health Organization IMPACT Programme. INTERPOL does this by acting as a catalyst for collective action against the counterfeiters and then coordinating law enforcement interventions into their activities.

Uganda and Tanzania are at the forefront of these efforts in East Africa and attendance at the training sessions is indicative of the collective desire of all participating agencies to work together and co-operate to make a difference in the region.

The INTERPOL-led OASIS Intellectual Property Crime Training and Operational Workshops will be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 20-25 November 2008, bringing together representatives from 26 African countries.