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## Five sentenced in four million cigarette smuggling plot

A crime gang, who attempted to smuggle almost four million illegal cigarettes into the UK, worth an estimated £950,000 in lost duty and taxes, has been sentenced.

Sirajadin Bahadin, 45 and Ireneusz Bocian, 55, from London and Faheem Ahmadzia, 55, from Doncaster, were arrested in August 2014, after HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) seized 3.8 million cigarettes as they were being unloaded from a lorry at a self-storage unit in Loudwater, Buckinghamshire.

In December 2014, the investigation led officers to the home of Mohammed Khalil, 43, in Enfield, North London. Khalil and Sebastian Rak, 31, were arrested after officers found £220,000 in cash, wrapped in carrier bags, in Rak's car. A search of the property revealed records detailing sales for around 400,000 illicit cigarettes, directly linked to the Buckinghamshire seizure in August.

David Margree, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“This was a major tobacco smuggling crime syndicate intent on lining their own pockets, regardless of the impact their theft had on taxpayers and the country's finances.

"All of the cigarettes seized are illicit and manufactured solely for the smuggling trade. The content of these cigarettes, and the conditions in which they have been produced, are unknown and unregulated – they are not the so-called bargain they profess to be.

“I would encourage anyone with information about tobacco smuggling to contact our 24-hour hotline on 0800 59 5000.”

The Fest' and Jin Ling branded cigarettes were found hidden in a consignment of car parts. Bahadin, Bocian and Ahmadzia were charged with tobacco smuggling offences and Rak and Khalil were charged with money laundering offences.

On sentencing His Honour Judge Pawlak commented:

“This is a crime against society, evading duty which would have been used to fund public services including the NHS. The victims of this offence are the honest tax payers of the United Kingdom. ”

### **Notes for editors**

1. Details of the defendants, sentenced on 15 December 2016, at Southwark Crown Court:

- Sirajadin Bahadin (DOB 12/06/71) of Chettle Court, Ridge Road,

- London, N8, was sentenced to three years imprisonment.
- Faheem Ahmadzia (DOB 10/01/61) of Lundwood House, Bond Close, Doncaster, was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment suspended for 24 months.
- Ireneusz Bocian (DOB 18/07/61) of Princess Avenue, London, N13, was sentenced to three years imprisonment.
- Mohammed Khalil (DOB 01/01/73) of Kingsway, Enfield, London, EN3, was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

2. Sentenced at Southwark Crown Court on 20 December:

- Sebastian Rak (DOB 06/08/85) of Pembroke Avenue, Enfield, London, EN1, was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

3. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

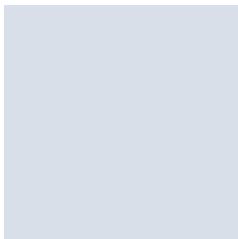
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