

Taiwan Keelung District Prosecutors Office

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Keelung Prosecutors Office, in U.S.-Taiwan Collaboration, Intercepts Smuggled Standardized Firearms; Five Defendants Indicted in Trafficking Ring

Under the leadership of Head Prosecutor Chen Chao-Shih, the Taiwan Keelung District Prosecutors Office, in collaboration with the Criminal Investigation Bureau's International Criminal Affairs Division, the Keelung City Police Bureau's Criminal Investigation Division, and the Zhonghe Precinct of the New Taipei City Police Department, successfully intercepted 16 standard-issue handguns smuggled into Taiwan. This operation was carried out through coordinated efforts between Taiwan and the United States and resulted in the arrest of several members of the trafficking ring.

Following the conclusion of the investigation, five detained suspects—Hsieh, Peng, Cheng, Yeh, and Chiou—were indicted for violations of “the Firearms, Ammunition, and Knives Control Act” and “the Smuggling Penalty Act”. The case has been formally prosecuted and brought before the court. All five defendants remain in custody and are subject to a no-contact order.

The case began in late May of this year when U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) discovered multiple parcels containing firearm components at the Miami International Mail Facility, en route to Taiwan. Upon receiving this intelligence from U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) promptly notified the Keelung Prosecutors Office. A chief prosecutor was then appointed, and a special task force was established with officers from CIB's International Criminal Affairs Division to lead the investigation.

According to the investigation, the smuggling ring acquired firearms in the United States, disassembled them into individual parts, and concealed them among a large number of hardware tools. These parts were then divided into five parcels, disguised as hardware shipments, and sent via international mail to Taiwan in an attempt to bypass customs inspection.

Given the significant number of standardized firearms involved, Taiwan and the U.S. immediately initiated an intelligence-sharing and joint defense mechanism. U.S. authorities successfully intercepted four of the parcels. Meanwhile, Taiwan's task force traced individuals connected to the remaining parcel, which could not be intercepted in time.

In early June, having identified the suspects and their locations, the task force began stakeouts and implemented technological surveillance. Although the suspects

initially left the parcels unopened and installed surveillance cameras to detect any law enforcement activity, they eventually lowered their guard and opened them. After days of close monitoring, the task force moved in. Peng, Cheng, Yeh, and Chiou—responsible for logistics, receiving the parcels, acting as lookouts, and unpacking the goods—were arrested. Further investigation led to the identification and arrest of Hsieh, the alleged ringleader who holds dual Taiwan-U.S. citizenship.

With assistance from the Criminal Investigation Bureau, the Ministry of Justice's West Coast Liaison Office, U.S. HSI, the Orlando Police Department, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the prosecutor, accompanied by personnel from the CIB's International Criminal Affairs Division, traveled to the U.S. to conduct intelligence exchange and on-site evidence verification. Through close cooperation with HSI, they successfully brought the seized firearms back to Taiwan for forensic examination—a landmark achievement in Taiwan-U.S. criminal justice cooperation.

This case, involving the attempted smuggling of 16 standard-issue firearms, represents a rare and serious threat to national public safety. Had the firearms entered circulation, they would have posed a grave risk to public order. Through coordinated efforts with U.S. counterparts, the smuggling attempt was thwarted, and the criminal ring dismantled. The Keelung District Prosecutors Office remains committed to international collaboration and vigilance to prevent illegal firearms from entering Taiwan.