



National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

Stakeholder Update

from the IPR Center's

Outreach and Training Section



Cartagena IP enforcement team's counterfeit seizures exceed \$20 million

CARTAGENA – The Port of Cartagena billboards itself as one of the top five busiest port in Latin America, accommodating high-capacity containerized vessels arriving from all over the world with millions of tons of cargo annually. Although the high-volume shipments are viewed as critical to stimulate the flow of commerce, they've also caught the eye of port authorities and their efforts to maintain safety and security for shippers and brand owners in search of protecting their cargo.

The port is under the watchful eye of a multi-agency enforcement team involving Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Cartagena's Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit; Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Container Security Initiative (CSI); the Colombian Police Fiscal and Customs Unit; and the National Directorate of Tax and Customs (DIAN).



The team has been responsible for a number of successful intellectual property operations, including the most recent seizure of nearly 600 cartons of counterfeit electronic merchandise containing falsely branded "Bose" stereo headsets and HiFi earphones. It was one of many shipments seized on container ships arriving at the port from China.

Last December, as part of "Operation Holiday Hoax," the team seized a total of 155,000 units of toys suspected of trademark infringement involving Disney, Marvel Characters Inc., Peppa Pig and L.O.L. Surprise! brands that – if genuine – would retail for more than \$5.4 million.



Additionally, HSI-Cartagena, in conjunction with DIAN, targeted a suspicious shipment of more than 500 cartons from Hong Kong said to contain mostly toys last August.

Four more containers were targeted for inspection in September and October. An inspection of the shipments revealed more counterfeit toys including some that were collected for further lead testing. The seizure came on the heels of Operation Firefox, as agents seized nearly 36,000 pairs of counterfeit athletic shoes and more than 1,000 other miscellaneous items.



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HSI-Cartagena, working cooperatively with an international group of criminal investigators and customs and tax officials seized multiple containers of merchandise for alleged copyright infringement. The goods, from American-based Procter and Gamble, arrived on 16 containers loaded with more than 12,000 boxes of counterfeit shampoos displaying such names as Head & Shoulders and Pantene. The counterfeit products – if sold on the street – would have retailed for \$13 million. According to a preliminary analysis conducted by investigators, the shipment originated in China, however the labels on the shampoo bottles were printed in Arabic.



The IPR Center stands at the forefront of the United States government's response to global Intellectual Property (IP) theft and enforcement of its international trade laws. The mission of the IPR Center is to ensure national security by protecting the public's health and safety, the U.S. economy, and warfighters, and to stop predatory and illegal trade practices that threaten the global economy. To accomplish this goal, the IPR Center brings together 25 partner agencies, consisting of 20 key federal agencies, INTERPOL, Europol and the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom in a task-force setting. The task force structure enables the IPR Center to effectively leverage the resources, skills, and authorities of each partner and provide a comprehensive response to IP theft.

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