



National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

Stakeholder Update

from the IPR Center's

Outreach and Training Section



“Operation Holiday Hoax” seizes counterfeit toys worth more than \$5M



CARTAGENA – In a port that is capable of handling more than 2.4 million tons of cargo in a year, you would think a containerized cargo shipment of toys could easily get lost in the daily shuffle. Not so, when a suspicious shipment arrives from China containing counterfeit toys, some of which tested positive for lead content.

The discovery was part of “Operation Holiday Hoax,” a multi-agency enforcement effort involving Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)-Cartagena’s Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU), 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 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.

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.



“ICE in Cartagena is committed to working with our Colombian partners and private industry to combat trademark infringement,” said Assistant Attaché Antonio Crespo. “We want to protect consumers from potential health hazards that often come with merchandise made with unapproved industrial materials and processes.”

The seizure comes on the heels of HSI-Cartagena’s Operation Firefox, as agents seized nearly 36,000 pairs of counterfeit athletic shoes and more than 1,000 other miscellaneous items connected with copyright infringement involving top brands such as Nike, Adidas, New Balance, Reebok, Puma, and Under Armour. The street value of the merchandise totaled \$55 million.

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