

# Taiwan Keelung District Prosecutors Office



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## **Taiwan-U.S. Joint Operation Thwarts 1.2 Tons of Marijuana Smuggling into Taiwan; Keelung District Prosecutors' Office Files Charges against Traffickers**

Head Prosecutor Chao-Shih Chen of Taiwan Keelung District Prosecutors Office (“District Prosecutors Office”), along with the Taiwan Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) International Criminal Affairs Division (ICAD), successfully prevented the smuggling of nearly 1.2 tons of marijuana into Taiwan through Taiwan-U.S. joint cooperation, with the further apprehension of the drug traffickers and charged four defendants (surnamed Sun, Feng, Wu, and Kao) with offenses such as second-degree drug smuggling under Article 4, Paragraph 2 of the Narcotics Hazard Prevention Act and smuggling of controlled articles under Article 2, Paragraph 2 of The Smuggling Penalty Act. The Prosecutors’ Office has requested a severe sentence from the court.

The case originated when the CIB received information from U.S. law enforcement that a certain container shipped from the U.S. to Taiwan was suspected of carrying marijuana. The District Prosecutors Office then appointed a task force to investigate. It was then discovered that the container was used to be packed with nearly 1.2 tons of marijuana, concealed within hollowed-out furniture paneling, disguised as furniture imports. With the massive quantity involved, the task force initiated intelligence exchange and joint prevention with U.S. law enforcement agencies. The U.S. then seized a large amount of marijuana while the task force monitored the container’s status in Taiwan. Following the container's declaration and contact for pick-up, the first arrests were made, apprehending the suspects Feng and Wu who picked up the container. The court approved their detention and prohibited visitation.

During the investigation, Head Prosecutor CHEN led CIB/ICAD officers and a Taiwan National Police Agency (NPA) police liaison officer to the U.S. to discuss a joint operation with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and collect evidence through Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Through information exchanges, the Taiwan-U.S. joint task force surmised that the suspect, Sun, who holds dual citizenship of Taiwan and the U.S., played a primary role in supplying,

packaging, and transporting marijuana from the U.S. to Taiwan. Acting on the intelligence, Sun was later apprehended at Taoyuan International Airport in March 2023 while transferring in Taiwan on his way back to the U.S. from Thailand. Sun was detained and denied visitation based on the evidence provided to the court. Sun, along with defendants Feng and Wu were all charged by the District Prosecutors Office on July 2, 2023. Additionally, the task force arrested Kao, the financier of the narcotics ring with ties to a gang background. Based on the investigation, Kao was also detained and jointly indicted for the drug case on September 18, 2023.

This case involves local culprits collaborating with Taiwanese-Americans, exploiting the differences between marijuana regulations in Taiwan and the United States to conspire in smuggling. The criminal ring purchased a substantial quantity of marijuana at a low cost in the U.S. and then sold it at inflated prices in Taiwan for illicit profits. The amount of marijuana smuggled, nearly 1.2 tons, shattered previous records in Taiwan's criminal history for marijuana smuggling. If it were to circulate in Taiwan's market, it could severely jeopardize the well-being of its citizens. Fortunately, this case was successfully thwarted through Taiwan-U.S. cooperation, leading to the tracing and apprehension of the drug traffickers. The Prosecutors' Office will remain committed to enforcing international joint defenses and rigorously preventing the inflow of marijuana from abroad into Taiwan.