



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Manila 1099

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16 May 2019

CUSTOMS MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
NO. 127 - 2019

To: All Deputy Commissioners
All Directors and Division Chiefs
All District/Port Collectors
And Others Concerned

**Subject: Regional Intelligence Liaison Office Asia-Pacific (RILO A/P)
Alert No. 3/2019, Lao PDR – Emerging Transit Point of
Methamphetamine**

Attached is the electronic mail dated 10 May 2019 of Ms. Sun Hwa Cho (Sunny), Intelligence Analyst, RILO A/P, World Customs Organization relative to the RILO AP Alert No. 3/2019, LAO PDR – Emerging Transit Point of Methamphetamine.

For your information and guidance.

For record purposes, please confirm the dissemination of this circular throughout your offices within fifteen (15) days from receipt hereof.

REY LEONARDO B. GUERRERO
Commissioner

MAY 20 2019



BOC-06-00034

CMC-127-2019

John
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RILO AP Alert No.3/2019: Lao PDR, emerging transit point of methamphetamine

From: RILO A/P (office@riloop.org)

To: icd@customs.gov.mn; k0799202160@yahoo.com; Australia-riilo@abf.gov.au; GABRIELLE.TRAMBY@ABF.GOV.AU; ANNALENA.CARROL@ABF.GOV.AU; dg-intelligence@customs.gov.bd; shamimakter_cus@yahoo.com; bihamo@mof.gov.bt; zulfaisaLsaherin@customs.gov.bn; azrey.ibrahim@customs.gov.bn; amanina.mahrub@customs.gov.bn; cam.customs.douane.2013@gmail.com; cam-customs-douane@live.com; gbhg4133@customs.gov.cn; leiyutian@customs.gov.cn; xulu@customs.gov.cn; qinda@customs.gov.cn; skhan@frcs.org.fj; jvuto@frca.org.fj; hk_liaison@customs.gov.hk; oliza_ks_kan@customs.gov.hk; kitty_fl_poon@customs.gov.hk; wy_yeung@customs.gov.hk; Vivek.Chaturvedi@icegate.gov.in; rakesh.dahiya@gov.in; eco.hongkong@mea.gov.in; jaspreet.sukhija@nic.in; khoirul.hadziq@customs.go.id; piasdo.muaranuli@customs.go.id; multilateral1.inacustoms@gmail.com; kakhki@irica.org; b.i.c.o@irica.org; A_Habibvand@irica.org; Amir_barez@ymail.com; tyo-chosa-ii@customs.go.jp; kcsiid@korea.kr; cipd@korea.kr; laocustoms.icd@gmail.com; whchan@customs.gov.mo; wykong@customs.gov.mo; mfadzli.abdjail@customs.gov.my; badrulnizam.nasir@customs.gov.my; Ismail.nashid@customs.gov.mv; Ismail.hamdoon@customs.gov.mv; GZTHBG@customs.gov.mn; icd.mcga@gmail.com; icd@customs.gov.mn; mcd.ygn@mptmail.net.mm; int-customs@mof.gov.mm; mmcustoms.intsec@gmail.com; bishnupaudel1967@gmail.com; crm@customs.gov.np; ganes.aryal@gmail.com; wan@customs.gov.np; Peter.Shepherd@customs.govt.nz; International.Liaison@customs.govt.nz; ndib@ndib.govt.nz; ci@fbr.gov.pk; adciap@hotmail.com; lahuim@customs.gov.pg; sioev@customs.gov.pg; vbhnsiove@gmail.com; rodrigogonzales@yahoo.com.ph; attytedraval@yahoo.com; aviali@revenue.gov.ws; tlia@revenue.gov.ws; aonesemo@revenue.gov.ws; hmccarthy@revenue.gov.ws; lvaaulu@revenue.gov.ws; TAN_Seow_Peng@cnb.gov.sg; CNB_Registry@cnb.gov.sg; Customs_International@customs.gov.sg; ZHANG_Yuguang@ica.gov.sg; azilah_abu_che@ica.gov.sg; kh.dharmakeerthi@customs.gov.lk; investigation3.rtc@gmail.com; dcperreira@mof.gov.tl; abelo@mof.gov.tl; saun@customs.gov.to; michaelc@customs.gov.to; faoneb@customs.gov.to; strief@vanuatu.gov.vu; jsala@vanuatu.gov.vu; cucdtcbl@customs.gov.vn; huongpttcbl@gmail.com

Cc: office@riloop.org

Date: Friday, 10 May 2019, 2:25 pm GMT+8

Dear colleagues,

Greetings from Seoul!

Please find the 'RILO AP Alert No.3/2019: Lao PDR, emerging transit point of methamphetamine' for your information.

Sincerely,

Sunny (Sun Hwa Cho), Intelligence Analyst

RILO AP



alert3_2019_lao_pdr_emerging_transit_point_of_meth.pdf
817.5kB

 RILO AP Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific		<h1>ALERT 3/2019</h1>
Lao PDR, Emerging Transit Point of Methamphetamine		
DATE	10 May 2019	
SOURCE OF INFORMATION	Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos and New Zealand Customs, UNODC	
CONTACT	Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific #721 Eonju-ro, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, 06050, Korea Tel: +82-2-510-1933 / Email: office@riloap.org	

Description

Lao PDR has emerged as a transit route of the methamphetamine originating from the Golden Triangle. According to the UNODC, the seizure of methamphetamine in the country, both in the crystal and tablet forms, recorded a steep surge by 1,379% and 110 % respectively in 2018 (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Methamphetamine Seizure in Lao PDR (2015 ~ 2018)

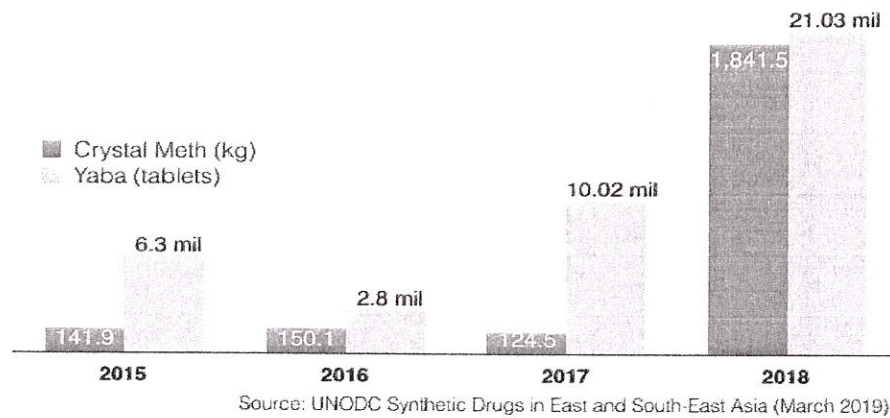


Figure 2: Methamphetamine Trafficking Departing Lao PDR (2015 ~ 2018)

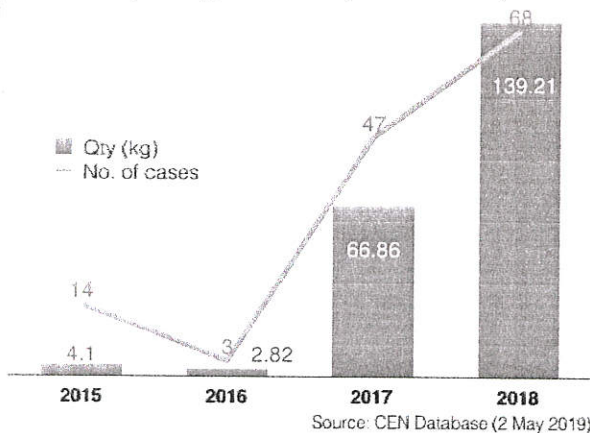
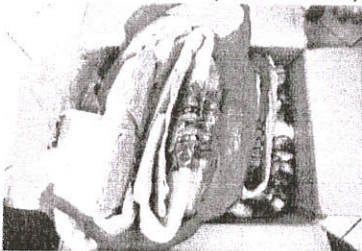
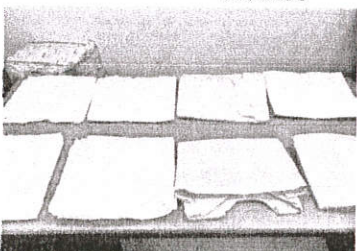
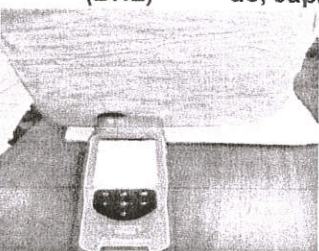

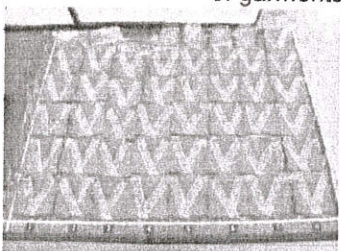
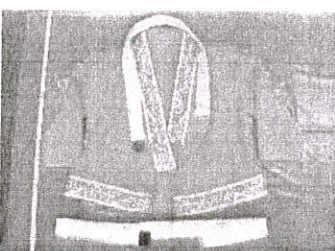
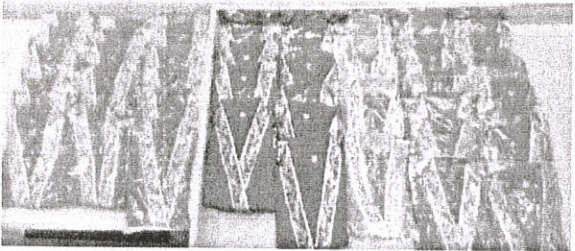



Figure 2 shows the increase of methamphetamine seizures departing Lao PDR since 2016. In 2018, the flow recorded an increase of 108% in terms of the quantity seized and 45% in terms of the number of cases. UNODC reported that methamphetamine transported from Myanmar to Laos was trafficked to the destination countries through mail or to the neighboring countries for further trafficking to the

destination countries¹. The neighboring countries of Lao PDR, including Thailand and Vietnam, have noted increasing flows of methamphetamine trafficked through border areas with the country in recent years².

At the Talks on the Strategy for Operation Mekong Dragon Asia-Pacific held in Korea in this April, Lao Customs introduced two recent seizures of crystal meth sent to Japan and Hong Kong, China through mail. It is worth noting the concealment methods of the two seizures – tribal costume and cosmetic product. It is intriguing that identical concealments were found in the seizures of other Members as well. Firstly, Table 1 shows the seizure made by Lao Customs in April, 2019 (No. 1) along with similar seizures reported by Japan (No. 2) and New Zealand (No. 3). The departure country was all Lao PDR.

Table 1: Seizures of Crystal Meth Concealed in Tribal Costume

1	9 Apr. 2019	Vientiane, Laos (Post Office)	5.6	Inside Hmong tribe's clothes	Mail (DHL)	Laos→Hokkai- do, Japan
						
2	28 Jan. 2019	Tokyo, Japan (Mail center)	0.16	Inside the hem and collar of garments	Mail	Laos→Japan
						
3	11 Dec. 2018	New Zealand (Mail center)	6.48	Inside the neck and waist seams of 44 shirts and 87 clear plastic sleeves	Mail (EMS)	Laos→Aucklan d, New Zealand
						

* Declaration: Garments (silk shirts) 472 USD, 20.8kg

¹ UNODC. *UN Briefing on the Recent Situation in Trafficking and Production of Methamphetamine in Asia and the Pacific*. Presented at the Talks on the Strategy for Operation Mekong Dragon Asia-Pacific. Seoul, Korea. April 2019

² UNODC. *Synthetic Drugs in East and South-East Asia: Trends and Patterns of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances*. Global SMART Program. March 2019

Table 2: Seizures of Crystal Meth Concealed in 'Arché Pearl Cream'

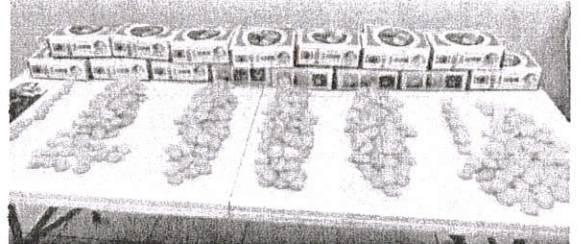
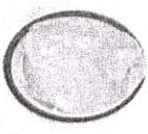

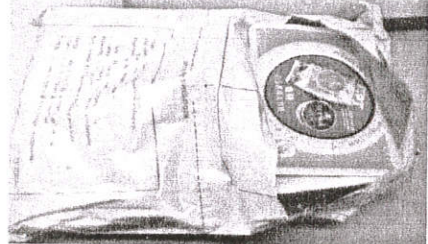

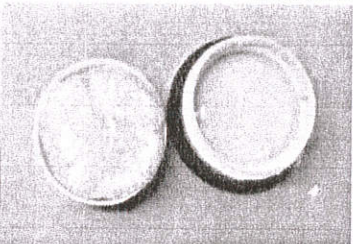
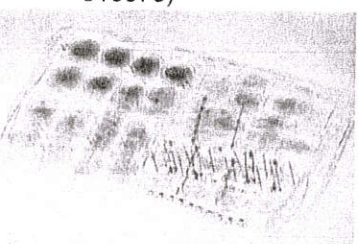


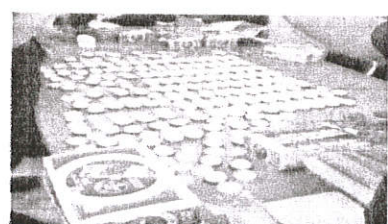
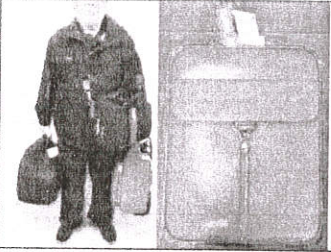
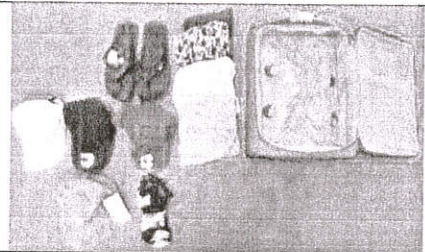
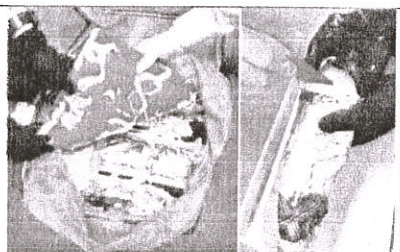
1	9 Apr. 2019	Vientiane, Laos (Post Office)	3	In the cosmetic cream (Arché Pearl Cream)	Regular mail	Laos → Hong Kong, China
						
						
						
2	31 Jan 2017 (CEN ID: 615046)	Auckland, New Zealand (Mail Center)	1	Inside false bottom of cosmetics container	Mail (DHL)	Bangui, Central African Republic → Auckland, New Zealand
						
						
						
3	10 Mar. 2016 (CEN ID: 510675)	New Zealand (Mail Center)	1.03	Inside 175 Arché Pearl Cream containers	Mail (EMS)	Nanjing, China → Auckland, New Zealand
						
						
						
4	9 May 2014 (CEN ID: 380184)	Soekarno-Hatta Airport, Indonesia (Airport)	5	Cosmetic cases carried by the air passenger (Indonesia, Female)	Air (MH717)	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia → Soekarno-Hatta Airport, Indonesia
						

Table 2 shows the second concealment method introduced by the Lao Customs. The crystal meth was concealed in the plastic jars of cosmetic cream 'Arché Pearl Cream'. In addition to the Lao Customs case (No. 1), New Zealand

(2, 3) and Indonesia (No. 4) reported the identical concealment in the CEN database. The seizures date back to May, 2014 when Indonesia intercepted an air passenger traveling from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (No. 4). In particular, the case No. 2 routed from the Central African Republic. It is remarkable the suspected Thai product – judging from the print on the box and container, was transported to Laos, Malaysia, China and all the way to Africa to be used to conceal crystal meth.

Activities of the transnational criminal organizations continue to be observed in the region. For example, after the seizure at Vientiane, Laos this April (See No. 1 of Table 2), the police authority arrested two Nigerian males in the city. In addition, a Korean male courier arrested at Narita International Airport in this March transporting approximately 2kg of crystal meth from Vientiane, Laos via Incheon, Korea, is suspected of involvement in the organized crime due to his past history of being recruited to the transnational criminal organization³.

		
<p><i>Korean male (71 yrs) arrested in Japan (Luggage Brand: Jeep)</i></p>	<p><i>When the suitcase was emptied</i></p>	<p><i>Methamphetamine concealed in the false compartment of suitcase</i></p>

Recommendation

RILO AP would like to draw Members’ attention to the methamphetamine trafficking from Lao PDR and its neighboring countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam. In addition, in order for timely identification of the trafficking trend, Members are encouraged to actively participate in the joint enforcement projects or operations coordinated by RILO AP such as DSINS and Operation Mekong Dragon Asia-Pacific.

Warning: The information in this report cannot be further disclosed without the prior consent of the information source. The information can be used for the law enforcement purposes only and cannot be used in any legal proceedings.

³ According to Korea Customs, he admitted the link with the African syndicate when he was arrested at Incheon International Airport transporting methamphetamine from Shanghai, China in April, 2014.