

# CUSTOMS

## GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Bureau of Customs



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**UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2023**

1st		Singapore	96.77%
2nd		<b>PHILIPPINES</b>	<b>87.10%</b>
		Indonesia	87.10%
		Malaysia	87.10%
3rd		Thailand	84.95%
4th		Cambodia	80.65%
5th		Brunei	78.49%
6th		Vietnam	74.19%
7th		Lao PDR	67.74%
8th		Myanmar	61.29%
9th		Timor Leste	30.11%

## PH Ranks 2nd Among Southeast Asian Nations in the 2023 UN Global Survey

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*Full Story on Page 2*



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*Full Story on Page 3*

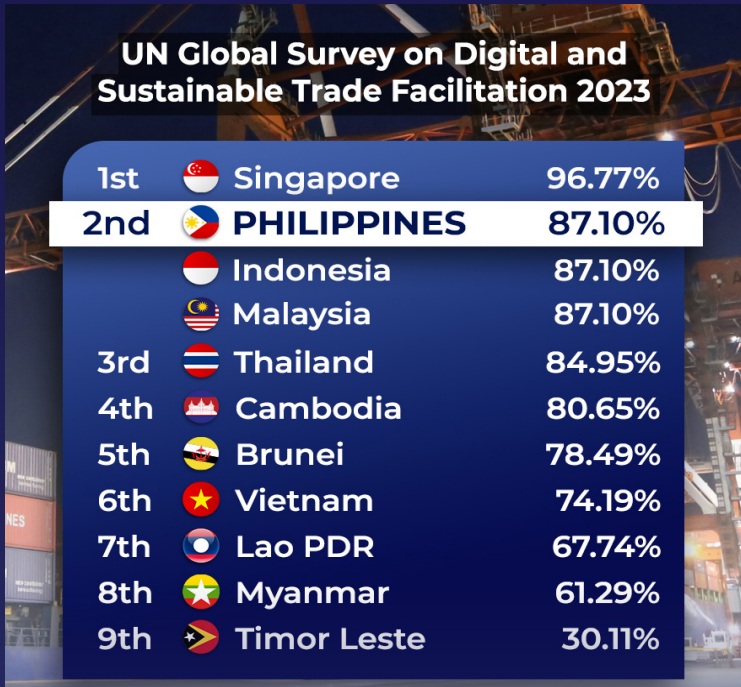


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*Full Story on Page 3-4*

## PH Ranks 2nd Among Southeast Asian Nations in the 2023 UN Global Survey



The Philippines has reaffirmed its dedication to digital and sustainable trade facilitation by attaining the second spot among Southeast Asian nations in the 2023 United Nations (UN) Global Survey. Climbing up from the third spot in the previous 2021 survey, this achievement underscores the country's continuous progress in modernizing trade processes and achieving world-class customs administration.

The survey, jointly conducted by various UN bodies, provides an in-depth analysis of trade facilitation progress in the country and highlights its remarkable achievements in fostering efficiency and promoting international collaboration.

In the latest survey, the Philippines achieved an impressive total Trade Facilitation score of 87.10%. Moreover, when compared to the 2021 survey, where the country scored 86.02%, the Philippines has shown steady improvement, reflecting its dedication to continuous progress since 2015. With the scores that the country gained for 2023, the Philippines, together with Malaysia and Indonesia, placed second in the Southeast Asian region, following Singapore with a score of 96.77%.

One of the key factors contributing to the Philippines' success on the global stage is the Bureau of Customs' (BOC) active participation in regional and sub-regional initiatives. By joining the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA) and expanding the ASEAN Single Window Agreement through the electronic exchange of the electronic Phytosanitary Certificate (e-Phyto), the country has paved the way for seamless and paperless cross-border trade. These initiatives, which provide an inclusive and capacity-building inter-governmental platform, have laid the foundation for the Philippines to transition towards less paper and eventually paperless trade.

The 2023 UN Global Survey also highlighted the Philippines' dedication in implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement through the Philippine Trade Facilitation Committee (PTFC). The country, through the BOC, has been proactive in adopting emerging regional and global measures, such as the recent CPTA, that promote paperless trade or e-trade.

Furthermore, the survey recommends cutting-edge paperless and cross-border trade facilitation measures, as well as initiatives aimed at supporting more inclusive and sustainable trade. The BOC has been pro-active in developing innovations and digital transformations to boost trade and promote ease of doing business for the stakeholders.

## BOC Doubles Down on Warehouse Raid, Finds P519M Imported Rice in Bulacan

In furtherance to the marching order of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to intensify operations against rice smuggling, the Bureau of Customs (BOC) on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, found an estimated P519 million worth of rice grains and "palay" in several warehouses in Bulacan province.

Upon thorough inspection of four warehouses located in Wakas, Bocaue and San Juan, Balagtas, both in Bulacan province, the BOC Inspection Team found 154,000 sacks of imported rice grains and 60,000 sacks of "palay."

The 154,000 sacks of imported rice grains came from Vietnam and Pakistan and have an estimated value of P431 million, while the 60,000 sacks of "palay" are valued at P88 million.

Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio stressed that: "Yesterday, we had a sectoral meeting with the President, who gave a clear directive about how we can help stop the rising cost of rice in the market. So, this is our answer to that order. We have just discovered four warehouses storing rice grains and palay, and if the owners of these warehouses fail to show proper documents that they legitimately imported the subject sacks of rice and paid correct duties and taxes thereon, then we will take immediate



legal action and confiscate the items here”.

The BOC Inspection Team is composed of Intelligence Group Deputy Commissioner Juvymax Uy, Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) Director Verne Enciso, elements of the CIIS at the Manila International Container Port (MICP) and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Task Force Aduana.

House Speaker Martin Romualdez and Representatives Erwin Tulfo, Wilfrido Mark Enverga, and Ambrosio Cruz Jr. also witnessed the inspection.

Commissioner Rubio signed the Letters of Authority (LOAs) directing the inspection of the Bulacan warehouses, which came a week after the inspection of another batch of Bulacan warehouses similarly witnessed by the House Speaker and lawmakers.

When the team arrived, the LOAs were served to the respective representatives of the warehouses before proceeding to inspect the said warehouses.

Depcom Uy disclosed that they received derogatory information about the warehouses and swiftly acted on its verification for the subsequent issuance of the LOAs.

“The key here is acting with immediacy because we understand that we are fighting against big-time organizations that can potentially cripple our agricultural sector. This is important not only to our agricultural workers, our farmers, but more so for the everyday Juan who toils to put food on the table,” he said.

For Enciso, the “impressive results” of the recent

operations should fire up the bureau to put an end to rice smuggling.

“Our intel about how massive the scale of these activities drives us to be one step ahead of any potential smuggling attempt. And so while we commend the people behind every operation, we must enjoin them to build up on the past successes and work on bringing these smugglers to justice,” he added.

Currently, the warehouses were temporarily padlocked and sealed as inventory of the imported goods stored thereat is being conducted by the assigned Customs examiners and witnessed by agents from CIIS, PCG, and the warehouse representatives.

The visitorial and inspection authority of the BOC is in accordance with Chapter 2, Section 224 of Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA).



## BOC Donates 80,000 Bags of Sugar to DA



The Bureau of Customs (BOC) donated 4,000 MT (80,000 bags) of forfeited Thailand White Sugar to the Department of Agriculture (DA) August 1, 2023, through the signing of the Deed of Donation and Acceptance.

Records show that subject donated sugar arrived at the Port of Batangas on 12 January 2023 on board M/V Sunward without the required Notice of Arrival. Consequently, the Port of Batangas immediately issued a Warrant of Seizure and Detention against the subject sugar and M/V Sunward, which were later ordered forfeited in favor of the government thru a Decision dated 14 April 2023.

Incidentally, pursuant to Paragraph D.1 of Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) Memorandum Circular No. 4, Series 2022 – 2023 which mandates: “Seized sugar with commercial value and capable of legitimate use may be disposed by the BOC through donation to government institutions”, the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Finance (DOF), DA, and the BOC entered into a Memorandum of Agreement.

Thereafter, on 21 July 2023, the Secretary of Finance approved the proposed donation of 4,000 MT refined sugar to the DA.

On 01 August 2023, the Deed of Donation and Acceptance was signed by BOC Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio and DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo F. Panganiban.

Witnessing the signing ceremony are officials from the DOF led by Officer-in-Charge Undersecretary Dakila Elteen Napao, with Jennifer D. Cruz, and Walter Fernandez; DA Assistant Secretaries Rex Estoperez, Kristine Evangelista and James Layug, Bureau of Plant Industry Director Glenn Panganiban, and SRA Administrator Paul Azcona.

In his message, Commissioner Rubio expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the untiring support of the DOF, DA and SRA in the donation process:

“I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the DOF, DA, and SRA for your invaluable contributions, guidance, and unwavering support to BOC, which made this donation possible. We firmly believe that, through DA, this donation will reach various local communities and enable our fellow Filipinos to conveniently access sugar.”

The activity was also attended by Atty. Vener S. Baquiran, Deputy Commissioner for Assessment and Operations Coordinating Group, Atty. Clarence S. Dizon, Director of the Port Operations Service, Atty. Marlon M. Agaceta, Chief of Staff of the Office of the Commissioner, Atty. Nicolas R. Kyamko III, Chief of the Auction and Cargo Disposal Monitoring Division, Atty. Jinny Apostol of the Ruling and Research Division, Legal Service, Atty. Filemon Mendoza, Jr., Deputy Collector of the Port of Batangas, and Atty. Gerard Turiano.

## **BOC Receives Highest Evaluation from COA for ensuring accurate and fraud-free Financial Statements**

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Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio expressed his appreciation and commended the dedication and performance of BOC personnel. "After more than two decades, we have been recognized for our audit compliance," proudly stated Commissioner Rubio.

Specific recognition was given to the Accounting Division of the Internal Administration Group (IAG), the Revenue Accounting Division of the Revenue Collection Monitoring Group (RCMG), and the Collection Districts for their diligent work. Their unwavering commitment and attention to detail have been instrumental in achieving this milestone.

Commissioner Rubio expressed gratitude to the COA auditors for their partnership in effecting meaningful change within the BOC. He acknowledged their Audit Observation Memoranda and audit findings, which have provided valuable guidance and served as reminders of the BOC's responsibility for the proper management of public funds and resources.

The Bureau of Customs remains steadfast in upholding strong financial controls and delivering exceptional services to the public. This recognition from the COA reinforces the BOC's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of public resources.

## **BOC Partners with the Office of the President to Safeguard OFWs' Balikbayan Boxes**



The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has taken a significant step forward in assisting Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) with their hard-earned balikbayan boxes through a strategic partnership with the Office of the President (OP) via the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) and the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC).

In a meeting held on August 3, 2023, at Malacañan Palace, Acting Deputy Commissioner Michael Fermin of the Internal Administration Group, along with other key BOC officials, met with Executive Secretary Lucas P. Bersamin and Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission Undersecretary Gilberto DC Cruz to address the pressing issue of unscrupulous forwarders victimizing numerous OFWs abroad using balikbayan boxes.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Fermin presented the concrete actions taken by the BOC to support OFWs and facilitate the release of their precious balikbayan boxes. One of the significant achievements highlighted was the successful release of 36 containers of abandoned consolidated shipments, comprising 9,689 boxes. Out of these, 9,011 boxes have been rightfully distributed to their respective owners, while 678 boxes remain unclaimed due to insufficient information. The BOC remains committed to

resolving this issue and reuniting these boxes with their rightful recipients.

To combat the reprehensible activities of unscrupulous forwarders involved in the balikbayan box scheme, the BOC has filed 11 criminal complaints to bring the perpetrators to justice and safeguard the interests of OFWs.

Moreover, the BOC is actively finalizing a joint memorandum agreement with the PAOCC, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), forwarders, and other stakeholders. This comprehensive agreement seeks to streamline processes, enhance coordination, and fortify efforts in safeguarding the welfare of OFWs and their balikbayan boxes.

Recognizing the importance of an informed and empowered OFW community, the BOC will intensify an information campaign through various social media platforms. Additionally, the bureau will collaborate with the DMW to include comprehensive information about balikbayan box importation in the agency's training program for OFWs. This initiative aims to educate OFWs about their rights, responsibilities, and ways to protect their balikbayan boxes during shipping.

Furthermore, the BOC is taking proactive measures by drafting a Customs Memorandum Order, which mandates the registration of deconsolidators with the BOC. This measure, along with the payment of a performance bond worth P2 million, will ensure that responsible parties are held accountable and that the handling of balikbayan boxes is carried out with the utmost care and efficiency.

In recognition of the BOC's commitment to assist OFWs and expedite the release of their balikbayan boxes, Executive Secretary Lucas P. Bersamin commends the bureau's dedication and perseverance. He also expresses admiration for the BOC's comprehensive and forward-looking action plans and policies aimed at effectively addressing the issue of balikbayan boxes.

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## BOC Collaborates with International Shipping Lines to Foster Trade Efficiency



The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has taken a significant step to enhance revenue collection, streamline customs processes, and secure trade by partnering with the Association of International Shipping Lines (AISL). The partnership was formalized through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Data Sharing signed on July 21, 2023.

This collaboration aligns with the implementation of Customs Administrative Order No. 08-2019, which aims to generate non-traditional revenues through effective monitoring and management of overstaying containers. To achieve this, the BOC aimed to establish a web-based

technology platform equipped with a centralized Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system.

As part of the MOA, the AISL will provide the BOC with access to its advanced technology platform known as the Automated Container Movement Monitoring System (ACMMS) and database. The ACMMS offers real-time information on container movements at all customs ports through a user-friendly dashboard. This includes crucial data such as the total number of containers discharged, loaded, overstaying containers, and container dwell time.

A notable feature of the ACMMS is its system-generated alert notification. The BOC will receive alerts when import containers approach a dwell time of seventy-six (76) calendar days from the date of arrival/discharge. This proactive notification allows the BOC to take necessary actions to prevent delays or violations, ensuring that import containers are re-exported within the required ninety (90) day period.

Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio, a strong advocate of customs modernization, expressed his excitement about the potential benefits of the MOA. He believes that embracing digitalization will not only elevate the BOC to a world-class customs organization but also demonstrate the government's commitment to efficiency and transparency.

"The partnership with AISL and the adoption of the Automated Container Movement Monitoring System is a testament to the kind of government we aspire to be – responsive, modern, and accountable," Commissioner Rubio remarked.

With the approval of the Department of Finance (DOF), the joint effort between the BOC and AISL marks a significant milestone in their pursuit of a more efficient customs system. The implementation of the ACMMS is expected to streamline container monitoring and movement tracking across all customs ports.

## BOC Chief Leads Meeting with Tobacco Companies to Fight Illicit Tobacco Trade

Bureau of Customs (BOC) Commissioner Bien Rubio led a meeting with executives of Philip Morris International (PMI) and Philip Morris Fortune Tobacco Corp. (PMFTC) to develop strategies in further improving the fight against illicit tobacco trade.

Rubio was joined by Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) Director Verne Enciso and Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) Chief Paul Oliver Pacunayan.

For the part of Philip Morris, the company was represented by Rodney Van Dooren, head of PMI's Illicit Trade Prevention; Erdie Ambrocio, PMFTC Illicit Trade Prevention Manager for Luzon; and Steve Lamosao, PMFTC Illicit Trade Prevention Executive for Visayas.

"Illegal traders who attempt to gamble with our laws will always find our Customs agents one step ahead of them. That has always been our goal and our mandate—to put these smugglers away and make them accountable, answerable and ultimately face the consequences of their nefarious activities", Rubio said.

"So, in this meeting, we identified the gaps in our strategies. These groups have been very creative and aggressive in entering our markets, accordingly close cooperation with tobacco companies is aimed



at addressing their various modus with even more comprehensive methods", he added.

Enciso said the discussion mainly focused on addressing the proliferation of illicit tobacco products in the market.

"It is important for us to recognize that these are not only very real threats, but well-orchestrated plans aimed at circumventing our laws. Our cooperation with companies and organizations put in place proper mechanisms to secure our borders and curb the illicit trade of tobacco," he stressed.

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During the meeting, the BOC received commendation for its recent operation in Indanan, Sulu, where 19,000 cases of smuggled cigarettes—with an estimated market value of P1.425 billion—were seized.

This impressive feat was made possible through the diligent efforts of the Intelligence Group, headed by Deputy Commissioner Juvymax Uy.

Uy emphasized how working together with the private sector and organizations can help the bureau's intelligence division.

"For the part of the intelligence community, our work involved profiling and verification of many information we receive and making sure we act in as swift as possible. But it also behooves us to analyze the data accurately so that when it comes to prosecuting these individuals and groups, there is no loophole they can use," he said.

Rubio also reiterated the bureau's commitment in safeguarding the nation's borders and upholding its core mandates.

Under his leadership, the BOC remains steadfast in preventing the entry of illicit tobacco products into the country, safeguarding public health, and protecting legitimate businesses.

The BOC, PMI, and PMFTC expressed their commitment to work closely together, sharing intelligence and expertise to effectively combat the illicit trade of tobacco.

The collaboration aims to create a formidable alliance against those involved in these illegal activities, ensuring the integrity of the tobacco industry and promoting a fair and competitive market.

## Commissioner Rubio Shares BOC's Initiatives on IPR Protection at the Asias Security Conference Exhibition in Singapore

Bureau of Customs (BOC) Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio was welcomed as a distinguished speaker at the prestigious Asias Security Conference Exhibition in Singapore on 26 July 2023. During his insightful speech and presentation, Commissioner Rubio discussed the BOC's unwavering commitment in combating counterfeiting, safeguarding trademarks, and protecting brands in the Philippines.

The Commissioner is joined by Director Verne Enciso of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service, Chief Paul Oliver Pacunayen of the Intellectual Property Rights Division, and Ms. Denise Asantor of the Office of the Commissioner.

Celebrating recent achievements in the field of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protection, Commissioner Rubio proudly shared that the Philippines has maintained a clean record for ten years in the United States Trade Representative's (USTR) Special 301 Report. Furthermore, the Philippines was recently delisted from the priority watch list of the European Union (EU) for the first time in the "Report on the Protection and Enforcement of IPR in Third Countries."

To combat the importation and exportation of counterfeit goods, the BOC has been relentless in its pursuit of IPR violators. Commissioner Rubio highlighted the BOC's Five-Point Priority Program,

which includes protecting the borders from illicit activities while promoting lawful trade and economic prosperity.

Sharing crucial data on seizures of counterfeit products from January 01 to July 14, 2023, Commissioner Rubio revealed that the BOC had seized a staggering Php21.3 Billion or USD387.2 Million worth of counterfeit goods in 219 operations. The BOC's Intelligence Group played a crucial role in developing strong partnerships with law enforcement agencies, trade owners, and stakeholders to achieve these significant results.

While celebrating these accomplishments, Commissioner Rubio acknowledged the challenges ahead. Two major challenges discussed were the expeditious facilitation of trade through brand certification/verification by brand owners and the emergence of e-commerce as a contributor to counterfeiting. He urged e-commerce platforms to tighten their policies to monitor retailers and prohibited products being sold on their platforms.

Commissioner Rubio expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to share the BOC's initiatives at the Asias Security Conference Exhibition. He emphasized that collaboration and cooperation among nations and stakeholders are vital in the fight against counterfeiting and the protection of Intellectual Property Rights. Commissioner Rubio reiterated the BOC's dedication to upholding the rule of law and safeguarding the interests of the Philippine nation, pledging to continue their efforts in securing borders and ensuring a safe environment for legitimate trade and economic growth.



## BOC-Clark, XIP, CAIDTF and PDEA seize two shipments of Shabu worth P16-M



Consistent with its mandate to strengthen border control, the Bureau of Customs-Port of Clark, under the leadership of its District Collector, Atty. Ricardo Uy Morales II, CESE, busted two shipments of Shabu with an aggregate value of P16,146,000.00 from Torrance, California, USA.

The first shipment was declared as "Ash + Axel 2PK Cryo Therapy Set" while the other shipment was declared as "Gent Leather Shower Gel 33.8", which were consigned to different receivers.

Both shipments were flagged as suspicious by X-ray Inspection Project (XIP) personnel. K9 sniffing was likewise conducted by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) K9 Unit which gave positive indication for the presence of dangerous drugs.

Physical examination conducted by customs examiners led to the findings of two (2) packs of Muscle Recovery Bath Soak containing white crystalline substances weighing 1,122 grams and 1,218 grams, respectively.

Samples were then turned over to the PDEA for chemical laboratory analysis which yielded positive result for Methamphetamine Hydrochloride or commonly known as "Shabu", a dangerous drug under the Republic Act (RA) No. 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

District Collector Morales immediately issued Warrants of Seizure and Detention against the subject shipments for violating Section 118 (g), 119 (d) and 1113 par. (f), (i), and (1)-(3) and (4) of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act in relation to R.A. No. 9165.

"The Port of Clark once again proved its commitment to stop the entry of illegal drugs into the country. We are grateful to our frontliners for their vigilance which resulted to series of apprehensions here in Clark but we are also bothered by the rampant smuggling of prohibited drugs. May these seizures be a warning to drug smugglers to stop what they are doing because we will not let these illegal drugs reach the public," said District Collector Morales.

"The Bureau of Customs will never cease in implementing strict border protection measures as we remain firm in our anti-illegal drugs campaign. We are further reinforcing our security protocols and we are consistent in providing rigorous trainings for our personnel to prevent all forms of smuggling," Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio said in a statement.

## BOC-Subic Intercepts P240M Worth of Counterfeit Goods

The Bureau of Customs - Port of Subic successfully apprehended two 40-foot container shipments containing counterfeit goods, such as Balenciaga, Louis Vuitton, Adidas, Calvin Klein, Under Armour, Lacoste, GAP, Nike, Zara, Reebok, and other brands, in violation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regulations. This operation demonstrates ongoing efforts to combat the infringement of intellectual property and protect the rights of legitimate businesses.

Following the intelligence report received by Port of Subic District Collector Carmelita M. Talusan, she immediately issued consecutive Pre-Lodgment Control Orders. Through a 100% physical examination and cross-referencing of documentation, customs officers identified the containers carrying merchandise suspected of infringing upon protected intellectual property rights.

Acting on the report, Customs Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio, together with District Collector Talusan and in partnership with other authorities, discovered 1,269 boxes of counterfeit products bearing trademarks and copyrighted materials without the required authorization from the rights holders. The shipments were initially reported to contain T-Shirts but were later found to contain assorted brand new apparel with logos and designs of branded goods, with an estimated value of Php240,000,000.00.

This successful operation is part of the unwavering commitment of the Bureau of Customs to protect the rights of intellectual property owners and prevent the circulation of counterfeit goods in the market. The brand owners and the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) SBMA are in support of these operations, and the BOC Subic will further strengthen coordination.

Warrants of Seizure and Detention were issued against the subject shipments for violation of Section 155 of R.A. No. 8293 (Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines), in relation to Section 1113 (f) of R.A. No. 10863 (CMTA).

Collector Talusan stated that the Port of Subic reiterates its commitment to ensuring transparency, accountability, and compliance in all customs operations as it strives to create an environment conducive to legitimate trade and economic growth.

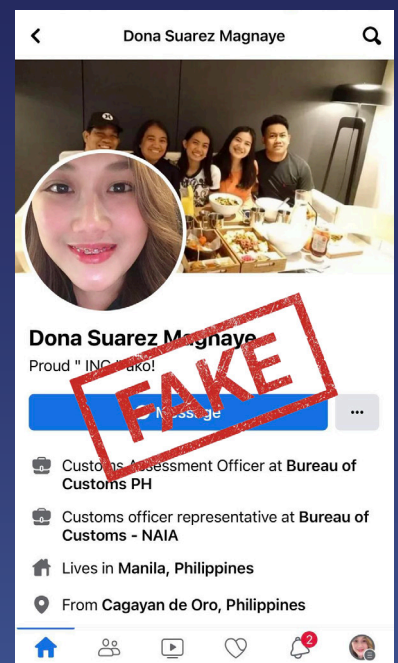
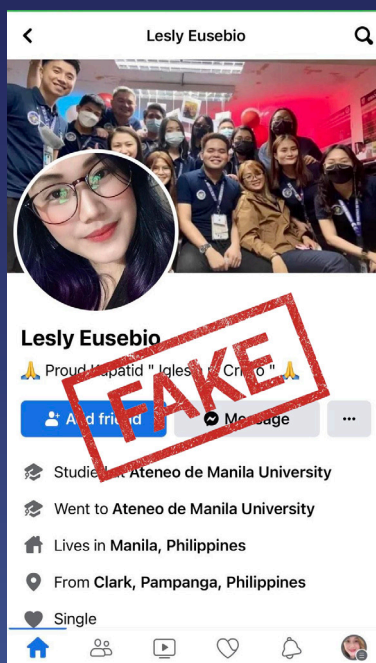


# MAHALAGANG PAALALA SA PUBLIKO

Ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) ay **nakakatanggap ng ulat** ukol sa mga **pekeng account** gamit ang **pangalan at larawan ng mga empleyado** ng ahensya.

Ang naturang mga pekeng account ay **nagpapanggap na taga-BOC** at humihiling sa mga biktima na **magbayad ng fees** gamit ang online payment, money remittance o bank transfer.

Ang mga opisyal ng BOC, kasama na ang BOC Customer Assistance and Response Services, ay **HINDI DIREKTANG nakikipag-ugnayan** sa mga tatanggap ng parcel/package sa pamamagitan ng tawag sa telepono, text message, o email upang ipalam o hilingin sa kanila na magbayad gamit ang online payment, bank deposit o money transfer para ma-release ang mga parcel/package.



Ang BOC ay nananawagan sa publiko na ireport ang katulad na pangyayari sa pamamagitan ng BOC hotline **(02) 8705-6000** o sa mga sumusunod na mga social media account ng BOC:

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