



PRESS RELEASE

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TEN YEAR ASBOS AND FIVE MONTH SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCES FOR PIRATE DVD SELLERS

- **SENTENCING ALSO INCLUDED TWO YEAR PROHIBITION ORDER**
- **JUDGE MENTIONS LINKS TO ORGANISED CRIME**

Following the recent operation by Hackney Borough Police and Hackney Council, working with FACT, targeting prolific pirate DVD sellers in Hackney, six defendants appeared for sentencing on Friday (9th).

Judge Stephen Dawson, sitting at Thames Magistrates Court gave 5 month prison sentences, suspended for 2 years, along with 10 year ASBOs barring the defendants from entering Hackney Town Centre, banning them from the possession of two or more DVDs and banning them from any selling or offering to sell anything to members of the public. He also gave all six defendants Prohibition Orders lasting 2 years requiring them not to break any of the immigration conditions imposed by the Immigration Service.

Judge Dawson said to the six defendants: *"You are being used by gangmasters in the criminal fraternity and were being sent [to the UK] to commit crime... You are people who are being used by criminal people but all of the same you are conducting your own lives here and choose to break the law. Prison is the only appropriate sentence."*

Speaking later he also added, *"These are very serious matters. I feel that it is highly likely that you are being used by sophisticated gang criminals in order to fund criminal activity in general."*

All six are Chinese nationals and were identified by the Immigration Service as being in the UK illegally. They all pleaded guilty to offences of film piracy by breach of copyright.

Inspector Richard Munns of Hackney Borough Police, Homerton Safer Neighbourhoods Team, said: *"By imposing ten-year Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and a suspended custodial sentence on these individuals, the judge has sent a very strong message out to the community to say that vendors of counterfeit goods aren't welcome on the streets of Hackney and their presence will not be tolerated. This has been a fantastic collaborative effort by all our partners and I'd like to pay tribute to everyone involved."*

Councillor Alan Laing, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods said: *"The activities of these pirate DVD sellers in Hackney have been a real nuisance for locals. People in Hackney have been telling me how fed up they are with being constantly pestered when they're out and about. Working with Hackney Police, Tesco and FACT, this result shows how seriously we have all taken this problem and how determined we are to stamp out this kind of criminal activity in Hackney."*

Kieron Sharp, FACT Director General, added: *"This is an outstanding result from a well planned and coordinated multi-agency operation. Nobody can now be in any doubt that the Courts can and will impose strong sentences for film piracy offences."*

The organised criminal nature of this type of offence has also been recognised and the public can now be clear that by purchasing pirate DVDs from street sellers they are handing money over to organised crime gangs."

The six are:

Jie HE, age 35, female

Quing CHEN, age 39, female

Qingzhu He, age 39, female

Wen HE, age 35, male

Xiao LINSHI, age 27, female

He CHIYEN, age 47, male