



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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**Press Statement**

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## **GET READY FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF FIRE CRACKERS**

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) urges the Customs Excise Department and the Police to intensify nationwide crackdown on the smuggling and sale of fireworks and firecrackers.

Earlier June this year during Hari Raya festival, CAP alerted the authorities of the rampant sales of banned firecrackers and fireworks. The authorities managed to seized large amounts of this contraband. In our survey even the last few days we found that same type of firecrackers and fireworks are openly sold to the extent where sales are being promoted through social media such as what apps by providing a list of firecrackers and their prices.

CAP has been calling on the authorities to impose heavier penalties on offenders including jail sentences for more than two decades. We believe that if enforcement is beefed up, smuggling of contraband can be curbed and the outflow of the Ringgit can be arrested.

The Kelantan Customs enforcement officers seized firecrackers and fireworks worth RM151,160 in May 2018 and arrested a lorry driver in connection to the case. In this instance, if the smuggling had been successful, those who later purchase the explosives will be violating the Explosives Act 1957 and the Customs would have lost RM98,254 in taxes.

The ever occurring and increase in incidences of smuggling, distribution and the sale of firecrackers and fireworks can only be stopped through strict enforcement and with the cooperation from the public not to buy the contraband. Under section 4(2) of the Explosives Act 1957, anyone found to be manufacturing, possession or importing firecrackers and fireworks can be jailed not less than five (5) years or fined RM 10,000 or both.

The violation of the existing laws to curb the blatant smuggling, distribution and sale of the contraband is obviously not taken seriously by the offenders.

Hence, the laws should be amended to also include the following:

- 1. A mandatory jail sentence for smugglers including the confiscation of his or her property and assets;**
- 2. The vehicle in which the contraband is found should be confiscated and auctioned off for the national coffers.**

The peoples' open and free indulgence in playing with firecrackers and dangerous fireworks also goes to show that the police are too helpless in stopping them. Firm action should also taken against people

caught playing with the firecrackers and fireworks. Hefty fine and jail sentences should be imposed on retailers and people caught playing with the firecrackers and fireworks. Parents whose children are caught buying and playing with firecrackers and fireworks must be made responsible for their children's acts.

Firecrackers and fireworks apart from being a great nuisance to the public are potential fire-bugs. Children in particular are vulnerable to injury. Lighted firecrackers and fireworks have also caused damage to life and property. Moreover, with the availability of such explosives, people are able to extract the explosive mixture from firecrackers and fireworks to make their own explosives with tragic result.

Of late, firecrackers are not only playing them during the major festivals but they have also been let-off during funeral processions, marriages and birthday celebrations. Only if strict enforcement is beefed-up can the smuggling and sale of such contraband be curbed.

As the Deepavalli festival draws close, CAP calls on the enforcement to be more frequent and stringent. Playing with firecrackers and fireworks is burning away hard earned money within minutes.

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