

Headline	BAT lauds govt efforts in curbing illicit cigarettes		
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## CONTRABAND

# BAT lauds govt efforts in curbing illicit cigarettes

**KUALA LUMPUR:** British American Tobacco (Malaysia) Bhd (BAT) is encouraged by the Federal Internal Security and Public Order Department's efforts to combat the smuggling of illicit cigarettes.

Managing director Erik Stoel said BAT Malaysia remained hopeful that the police would continue to apply pressure and deal a swift and crippling blow to criminals who fund a culture of organised corruption in the country.

This was in reference to the identification of four syndicates whose main contraband consisted of smuggled cigarettes.

"We have constantly appealed for serious action to be taken. This issue can no longer be ignored and it requires a cross-government action plan to effectively

ly tackle the problem," said Stoel in a statement yesterday.

He added that all key ministries and agencies had a role to play.

The Health Ministry's Tobacco Control Sector, the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry, the Home Affairs Ministry, Bank Negara Malaysia, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Financial Crime Centre could lend their expertise and jointly support the ongoing efforts of law enforcement agencies, it added.

"As the legal industry leader, we are willing to provide our full support to the government's effort to curtail this menace — our extensive international experience tells us that a joint collaboration between the private and public sector can work," he said.



*British American Tobacco (Malaysia) Bhd managing director Erik Stoel says the company is willing to provide its full support to the government's effort to curtail the smuggling of illicit cigarettes.* PIC BY LUQMAN HAKIM ZUBIR

The statement comes on the back of the findings of a recently published report by leading research and analyst firm Oxford Economics on the broader impact of the illicit tobacco trade in Malaysia.

The report highlighted that since the black economy gained a foothold, the country's gross domestic product, economy, public health agenda, reputation and legal employment opportunities had been undermined.