Counterfeit and other crimes

In many parts of the world, organized criminal groups are involved in the $250 billion a year counterfeit trade. By buying fakes you could be supporting groups such as the Camorra, the Mafia, the Triads and the Yakuza, as well as indirectly funding other crimes.

Counterfeiting can be linked to...

- Labour exploitation,
- Harmful and potentially dangerous products, and a $250 billion a year funding source for organized crime:

Find out about the true costs of counterfeit goods.

Counterfeiting often involves...

Here’s what you can do to stop counterfeiting

The simplest way to help stop this crime is to not buy counterfeits and to be smart about what you purchase.

There are a number of actions you can take, including:

• If the price of the item you’re looking at is significantly lower than in a reputable shop, be wary of what you might be buying!

• Find out whether the goods you are buying come with any form of guarantee or after-sales service; if they don’t, or if there is no option to take one out, then be wary!

• If you’re able to look at the actual product, check the quality, labels and packaging; if words are misspelt or the images are poor then this is a sure sign that the item is a counterfeit.

• If where you’re buying something doesn’t seem like the sort of place that would sell a certain type of product be careful! Also, make sure that any online payment option is secure.

• If you’re unsure then try visiting the official company website first and see if they list any recommended, licenced retailers. Remember: if you’re online and you purchase something on a website run by criminals you might be opening yourself up to cyber fraud and identity theft.

• Learn more and find out about the risks: visit www.unodc.org/counterfeit.

For further information and sources on this leaflet, please consult the UNODC Focus Sheet available from www.unodc.org/counterfeit.

Labour exploitation, harmful and potentially dangerous products, and a $250 billion a year funding source for organized crime: Find out about the true costs of counterfeit goods.

SHOPTING: TO DO LIST

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COUNTERFEIT
DON’T BUY INTO ORGANIZED CRIME
Counterfeit: what’s the extent?

Counterfeit: a serious threat to health and safety

Counterfeit goods and fraudulent medicines pose a serious risk to public health and safety. With zero testing, no legal regulation and very little recourse for consumers, you could be putting yourself at risk from unsafe and ineffective items.

Did you know that...

- In parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America, fraudulent medicines can amount to as much as 30 per cent of all sales.1
- Harmful and potentially deadly ingredients have been used in counterfeit food and drinks, including incidents where melamine (a chemical normally used in plastic) was discovered in baby formula and industrial methanol (from windscreen wiper fluid) was found in fake alcohol.
- The scope of counterfeit electronics products is extensive and affects both everyday appliances and goods, as well as parts in the supply chain which are then inadvertently used in legitimate items.

Counterfeit: the social and ethical costs

You might think that buying counterfeit goods is harmless and is simply a way to get the latest products at a much lower price. But think again: the impact may often be far more than people realize.

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Make sure that when you are purchasing medicines you do so from a trusted source.


Source: Environmental impact: Toxic dyes and chemicals disposed of unlawfully, and unregulated air pollution are just two of the many ways that counterfeiting could contribute to environmental harm.

Labour exploitation: As jobs in the production of counterfeit goods can be unregulated and low paid, workers are placed in a vulnerable position.