



# COUNTERFEIT



DON'T BUY INTO  
ORGANIZED CRIME

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.**









**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

# Counterfeit: what's the extent?

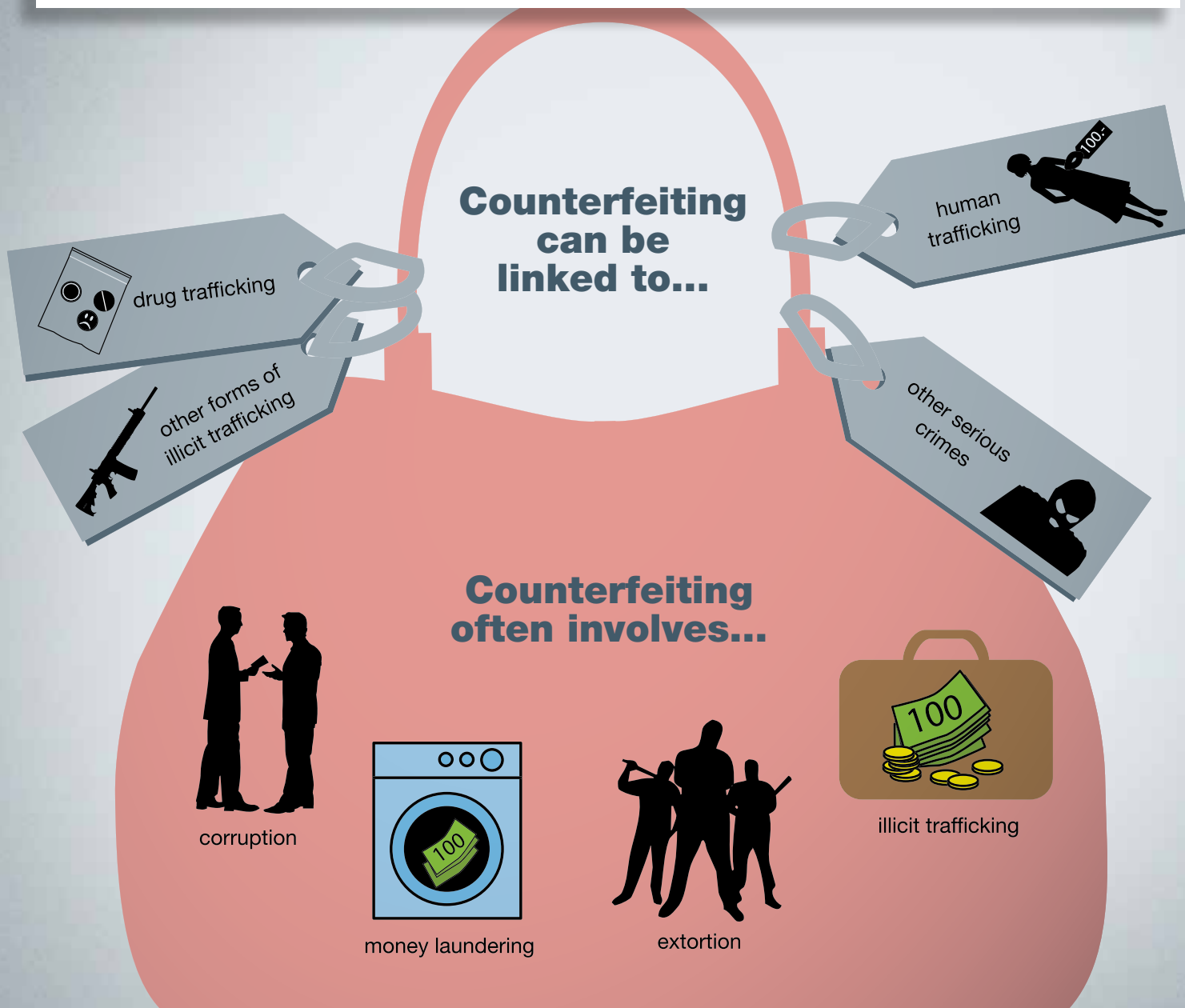
The diverse nature of illicitly produced goods (select categories)

	<b>Automotive parts</b>	Scooters, engines, engine parts, body panels, air bags, windcreens, tyres, bearings, shock absorbers, suspension and steering components, automatic belt tensioners, spark plugs, disc brake pads, clutch plates, oil, filters, oil pumps, water pumps, chassis parts, engine components, lighting products, belts, hoses, wiper blades, grilles, gasket materials, rings, interior trim, brake fluid, sealing products, wheels, hubs, anti-freeze, windshield wiper fluid
	<b>Chemicals/pesticides</b>	Insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, non-stick coatings
	<b>Consumer electronics</b>	Computer components (monitors, casing, hard drives), computer equipment, webcams, remote control devices, mobile phones, TVs, CD and DVD players, loudspeakers, cameras, headsets, USB adaptors, shavers, hair dryers, irons, mixers, blenders, pressure cookers, kettles, deep fryers, lighting appliances, smoke detectors, clocks
	<b>Electrical components</b>	Components used in power distribution and transformers, switch-gears, motors and generators, gas, and hydraulic turbines and turbine generator sets, relays, contacts, timers, circuit breakers, fuses, distribution boards and wiring accessories, batteries
	<b>Food, drink and agricultural products</b>	Fruit (kiwis), conserved vegetables, milk powder, butter, ghee, baby food, instant coffee, alcohol, drinks, candy/sweets, hi-breed corn seeds
	<b>Pharmaceuticals</b>	Medicines used for treating cancer, HIV, malaria, osteoporosis, diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, obesity, infectious diseases, Alzheimer's disease, prostate disease, erectile dysfunction, asthma and fungal infections; antibiotics, anti psychotic products, steroids, anti inflammatory tablets, pain killers, cough medicines, hormones, and vitamins; treatments for hair and weight loss
	<b>Toiletry and other household products</b>	Home and personal care products, including shampoos, detergents, fine fragrances, perfumes, feminine protection products, skin care products, deodorants, toothpaste, dental care products, shaving systems, razor blades; shoe polish; non-prescription medicine

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "The Economic Impact of Counterfeiting and Piracy: Executive Summary", p.10, 2007, OECD Publishing. Available from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264037274-en>.

# 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.



# 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...

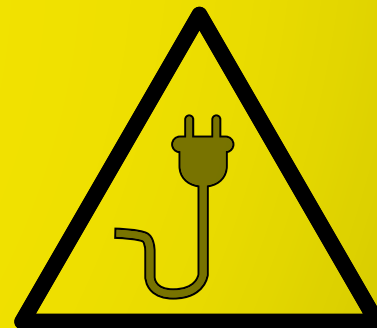


...in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America, **fraudulent medicines** can amount to as much as **30 per cent of all sales**?\*

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



...harmful and potentially deadly ingredients have been used in counterfeit food and drinks, including incidents where melamine (a chemical normally used in plastics) 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?

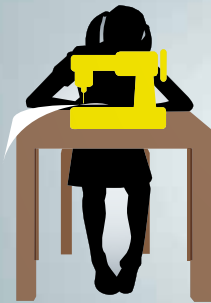
\* Source: World Health Organization (WHO), "Counterfeit medicines: an update on estimates", 15 November 2006. Available from [www.who.int/medicines/services/counterfeit/impact/TheNewEstimatesCounterfeit.pdf](http://www.who.int/medicines/services/counterfeit/impact/TheNewEstimatesCounterfeit.pdf).

# 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.

## 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.

# 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:

## SHOPPING: TO DO LIST

- *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 from 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](http://www.unodc.org/counterfeit).*



**For further information and sources on this leaflet, please consult the UNODC Focus Sheet available from [www.unodc.org/counterfeit](http://www.unodc.org/counterfeit).**