

12 February 2014



IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY

**ANNUAL STATISTICS
REPORT 2013**

Highlights

Decrease in Number of Immigration Offenders Arrested

The number of Immigration Offenders (IO)* arrested continues to decline since 2001. The total IO figure fell by 2% from 2,580 in 2012 to 2,530 in 2013.

**IOs refer to Illegal Immigrants (II) and Overstayers (OS).*



Increase in Number of Harbourers & Employers of Immigration Offenders

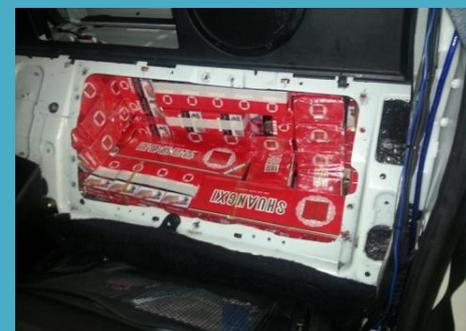
The number of harbourers of IOs arrested in 2013 registered a sharp increase from 77 in 2012 to 233 in 2013.

Similarly, the number of employers of IOs arrested in 2013 rose from 41 in 2012 to 97 in 2013.



Increase in Number of Contraband Smuggling Cases

The number of contraband smuggling cases detected has increased from 80,200 in 2012 to 99,700 in 2013.



Decrease in Number of Immigration Offenders Arrested

In 2013, the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) cleared about 203 million travellers, an increase of about 3.6% compared to 2012. ICA faces the constant challenge of increasing traveller volumes and the need to clear them efficiently while ensuring that security is not compromised.

2. The total number of Immigration Offenders (IO) arrested in 2013 registered a 2% decrease as compared to 2012. The number of Illegal Immigrants (II) has declined since 2011 while the number of Overstayers (OS) has increased slightly in 2013. 600 IIs and 1,930 OS were arrested in 2013, registering a fall of 13% and an increase of 2.1% respectively as compared to 2012.

Overview on Immigration Offender Situation			
	2011	2012	2013
Illegal immigrants (II) arrested	930	690	600
Overstayers (OS) arrested	2,180	1,890	1,930
Total number of Immigration Offenders (IO) arrested	3,110	2,580	2,530

3. The number of IOs arrested has declined since 2001. This is mainly attributed to ICA's multi-pronged approach in dealing with the IO situation in Singapore by enacting deterrent laws, enforcing checks at our borders, conducting inland enforcement, educating our community on illegal harbouring offences. ICA also works closely and cooperates with our regional counterparts to keep IOs at bay.

Increase in Number of Harbourers and Employers of Immigration Offenders

4. The number of harbourers of IOs arrested in 2013 registered a significant increase from 77 in 2012 to 233 in 2013. Similarly, the number of employers of IOs arrested in 2013 rose from 41 in 2012 to 97 in 2013.

Overview on Harboursing & Employment of IO Situation			
	2011	2012	2013
Harbourers of IOs arrested	40	77	233
Employers of IOs arrested	23	41	97

5. Harbourers and Employers (H/E) figures have been on the rise since the 3rd quarter of 2012. One of the key reasons for the sharp increase is that ICA had taken over all the investigative and associated functions for harbouring and illegal employment cases from the Police since 1 July 2012. This transfer enables ICA to have better oversight of the enforcement of all immigration related offences. This has also led to better synergies and efficiency in tackling immigration offences. ICA also works closely with other enforcement agencies such as the Police and Ministry of Manpower to crack down on such illegal activities. At the same time, ICA has been embarking on our public education drive to spread our key messages to the community so that they do not harbour IOs.

Extract from case files...

On 15 May 2013, a check was conducted in the vicinity of Hougang Avenue where two Chinese nationals were arrested in one of the units for residing in Singapore illegally. The landlord, a 57-year-old Singaporean man, present during the arrest, was charged for harbouring these foreigners illegally. Investigations revealed that the landlord rented out a room to the foreigners without exercising due diligence as required by the law. Under the Immigration Act, homeowners who are found guilty of harbouring immigration offenders may be sentenced to an imprisonment of between six months to two years, and a fine not exceeding S\$6,000 or to both.

6. IOs enter Singapore mainly to seek employment and they pose potential law and order problems in Singapore. The public plays an important role to keep this problem in check by not employing or harbouring IOs. Without a job or shelter, these IOs will not find it attractive to come to Singapore. ICA, in collaboration with our strategic partners and the community, will continue with our efforts to deny sanctuary to IOs, preventing them from seeking shelter or illegal employment, and to further take to task those who harbour or illegally employ IOs.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

7. Community partnerships also play a critical role in supporting ICA's mission to keep the H/E situation in check. We have about 100 dedicated volunteers who serve as ICA's Ambassadors to help reach out to the community. Among them are teachers, taxi drivers, businessmen, retirees and grassroots leaders. Besides helping to educate senior citizens, youths, students and foreign workers on ICA's role in border security, these Ambassadors are also actively involved in ICA's outreach programmes to help spread anti-harboursing messages¹ to the public.



ICA Ambassadors (in green) spreading anti-harboursing messages to the public

¹ Under the Immigration Act, the homeowner is liable to be charged for harbouring overstayers and/or illegal immigrants in his house if investigations reveal that he has not exercised due diligence as required by the law.

If the homeowner is found guilty of recklessly (i.e. failing to carry out all three due diligence checks or carrying out only one of these checks) or knowingly harbouring overstayers and/or illegal immigrants, he may be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not less than six months and not more than two years AND a fine not exceeding S\$6,000. OR

If a homeowner is found guilty of negligently (i.e. carrying out only two of the three due diligence checks) harbouring overstayers and/or illegal immigrants, he may be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months OR a fine not exceeding S\$6,000 OR to both.

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF CONTRABAND SMUGGLING CASES



8. On 20 August 2013, at about 4am, a female traveller arrived at the Tuas Checkpoint. In the course of routine baggage checks, ICA officers detected unprocessed bird's nest weighing approximately 2.4kg in two biscuit tins and two plastic containers packed amongst her belongings. The case was referred to the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) for further investigations.

Overview on Contraband Smuggling Detection Situation			
	2011	2012	2013
Total number of cases detected	80,800	80,200	99,700

9. Bird's nest, loose tobacco, firecrackers, ninja stars, knuckle dusters are some of the numerous contraband items detected by ICA officers. For 2013, there was a significant increase in the number of cases detected. A total of 99,700 cases were detected compared to 80,200 in 2012, registering a 24.3% jump. This shows that the suite of measures which include intensive public awareness effort and cooperation with enforcement agencies have remained effective in foiling smuggling attempts.



(From top): Loose tobacco and firecrackers



(From left): Ninja stars, throwing knives and knuckle duster

Methods of Concealment

10. While smugglers of contraband items invent new ways of concealment, they also use old tricks to escape detection by ICA officers. Unfortunately for these smugglers, experienced ICA officers are able to spot tell-tale indicators and successfully thwart the smuggling attempts.

Extract from case files...

On 25 October 2013, the ICA and the Singapore Customs jointly foiled an attempt to smuggle 5,781 cartons of contraband cigarettes through the Tanjong Pagar Scanning Station. The consignment was declared to be non-petroleum lubricants for recycling purpose. However, contraband cigarettes were found in modified petroleum drums. Potential customs duty and GST evaded were estimated to be about S\$468,000.



11. The same method of concealment could also similarly be employed by terrorists to smuggle dangerous materials such as weapons or explosives into Singapore. Therefore, ICA does not condone any smuggling attempt and appropriate actions will be taken against the smugglers.

Criminalising Marriage of Convenience

12. ICA takes a serious view of individuals trying to circumvent our system by engaging in marriage of convenience (MOC) to obtain immigration facilities in Singapore. MOC cases have been typically charged under Section 57(1)(k) of the Immigration Act where the individuals are charged for making false statements in obtaining immigration facilities. The penalties for the offence are a fine not exceeding S\$4,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both.

13. In August 2012, a specific provision of the Immigration Act, Section 57C, to criminalise MOC was introduced to send a strong deterrent signal and better enable ICA to definitively deal with those who try to abuse the system. This applies to those who have contracted/entered into an MOC or those who have arranged or assisted in arranging such marriages on or after 19 December 2012. The penalties for the offence are a fine not exceeding S\$10,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years, or both. Their immigration facilities will also be revoked.

14. For 2013, 124 persons were convicted for marriage of convenience under the provision, Section 57C while another 160 were convicted for false declaration under Section 57(1)(k). ICA will not hesitate to take action against those who have facilitated MOCs or submitted their applications under false representations.

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