

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Documentary Explores the Connections between Organized Crime and Contraband Tobacco

December 6th, 2022 – The National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco’s (NCACT) Executive Director Rick Barnum announced today the launching of a new documentary named *Lawlessness*.

“We are proud to be launching *Lawlessness* today, a documentary that explores the organized crime links to contraband tobacco,” began Barnum. “The documentary interviews law enforcement experts and other professionals who know firsthand the impacts that criminal gangs and illegal cigarettes have on communities across Ontario.”

Ontario reports losing over \$750 million in lost taxes to contraband tobacco every year. One in three cigarettes in the province are illegal, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) estimating there to be over 175 organized crime groups involved in the illicit trade. The millions of dollars made off contraband tobacco every day are used in other criminal activities, such as drugs, guns and human trafficking.

“Ontario continues to be the epicentre of contraband tobacco in Canada. Illegal cigarettes manufactured in the province can be found all across Canada, from Port aux Basques, Newfoundland, to Abbotsford, British Columbia. Criminal gangs have been able to operate with near impunity, transporting millions of cigarettes in every region of Canada for years,” continued Barnum.

Individuals interviewed for the documentary include the leads of the Ontario and Quebec contraband tobacco enforcement teams, former Member of Provincial Parliament Toby Barrett, journalist Mark Bonokoski, the Chair of Toronto Crime Stoppers, and representatives of the convenience store industry.

“We cannot allow illegal cigarettes to be normalized within our society and allow laws to be broken every day. It’s time for the Government of Ontario to support law enforcement in taking action against contraband tobacco to address organized crime across the province,” concluded Barnum.

The full documentary can be found [here](#).

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The National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco is a Canadian advocacy group formed by organizations and associations concerned about the growing danger of contraband cigarettes. NCACT members share the goals of working together to educate people and urge government to take quick action to stop this growing threat. More information about the Coalition can be found on our website, www.stopcontrabandtobacco.ca.

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