

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# New Brunswick Takes Action Against Criminal Gangs

March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 – Today, the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco (NCACT) congratulated the Government of New Brunswick for their budget last week which included \$2 million to create a unit which will disrupt and dismantle the underground market, including contraband tobacco.

“We would like to congratulate the Government of New Brunswick for taking action against an important funding source for criminal gangs operating in and across the province,” began Gary Grant, National Spokesperson for the NCACT.

A recent Ernst & Young report, commissioned by the Convenience Industry of Canada Council, found that New Brunswick legal tobacco revenue had increased by \$5 million in the month of June 2020 due to disruptions of the illegal market caused by COVID-19 restrictions.

“Hundreds of organized crime groups have transported millions of illegal cigarettes in and across New Brunswick over the past years. These new investments which will create a new unit to disrupt the underground market will help to combat organized crime groups involved in illegal cigarettes, as well as illegal cannabis, drugs and guns,” continued Grant.

The NCACT’s most recent pre-budget submission recommended the government take action to curb the growth of illegal cigarettes in the province by creating a unit dedicated to contraband tobacco enforcement. As has previously been proven, the creation of this unit will help law enforcement in dealing with the underground market, including contraband tobacco.

“New Brunswick now joins provinces like Quebec and Manitoba in taking action against contraband tobacco, combatting criminal gangs and returning millions of dollars to the public treasury. We look forward to working with the government and the newly established unit.” concluded Grant.

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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](http://www.stopcontrabandtobacco.ca).*

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