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***News Release***

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|  | For the attention of **News Desks** | | No. of pages:2 | |  |
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**Hammer to fall on criminal’s gold**

Almost 150 kilos of gold, estimated to be worth more than £2.5 million, which was smuggled into the UK by a criminal gang, is being sold at auction in Belfast next week.

The gold was seized during an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) into a £9 million smuggling plot that saw the gang’s leader, Chaudry Ali of Middlesex, jailed for nine years in 2012. He was ordered to pay back £4.3 million of his criminal profits or serve an extra ten years in prison, when he appeared at Kingston Crown Court in November 2014.

Kevin Newe, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Our work doesn’t stop when a criminal is sentenced; we always look to reclaim their illegal profits for the nation’s finances to fund the public services used by everyone. By auctioning the gold we seized during the investigation we are moving another step closer to bringing this long and complicated case to a conclusion and ensure justice is fully served.”

The gold will be auctioned on 30 October at Wilsons Auctions in Belfast. Viewing takes place on 28 and 29 October. With guide prices ranging from £200 to £5,000 per lot, catalogue entries include Asian gold bracelets, necklaces, rings, a statue and gold bars. Two online auctions have already taken place and so far raised almost £700,000 for the public coffers.

Aidan Larkin, Asset Recovery Department Manager for Wilsons Auctions Ltd, added:

“We are delighted to be entrusted with the sale of the gold on HMRC’s behalf after such a successful investigation and playing our part in realising the assets so money can go back into the public purse.”

Further action to recover the proceeds of crime is being taken by selling properties and land worth nearly £2 million owned by Ali in Birmingham and London.

**Notes for editors**

1. A photograph of the defendant and goods seized, including video footage of the gold, are available on request or at HMRC’s flickr channel [www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk](http://www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk)
2. Details of the defendant sentenced in December 2012 and confiscation order granted in November 2014, both at Kinston Crown Court, are available at: <http://www.mynewsdesk.com/uk/hm-revenue-customs-hmrc/pressreleases/gold-smuggler-in-ps4-3-million-crime-payback-1083599>
3. Full catalogue details are available at www.wilsonsauctions.com.
4. Anyone with information on suspected tax fraud should contact the Customs Hotline on 0800 59 5000.
5. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

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**Press enquiries only please contact:**

Jennie Kendall, Regional Press Officer for London

Tel: 07810 815832

E-mail: jennie.kendall@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Or

Helen Danson

Tel: 07730 812571

E-mail: helen.danson@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Out of hours

Tel: 07860 359544

**Website** www.hmrc.gov.uk