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Tobacco law amendments

The Government is today publishing a Bill for an Act to amend the Tobacco Act, 1997. This Bill is in response to the identification of a lacuna in the current law regarding the concealment of cigarettes in the bodywork etc. of motor vehicles in connection with illicit tobacco activity in particular where the amount of cigarettes so concealed is not a commercial quantity.

The Bill provides for new offences related to the concealment of cigarettes within motor vehicles. The offences are (1) concealing or being in any way knowingly concerned with the concealment of cigarettes within a motor vehicle and (2) being in charge of a motor vehicle in which cigarettes are concealed.

The penalties for these offences are dependent on the amount of tobacco concealed. Provision is also made for the forfeiture of the tobacco and motor vehicle concerned on the application of the Attorney General.

The Chief Minister said: "The Government is committed to strengthening the powers available to HM Customs and Royal Gibraltar Police officers in dealing with illicit tobacco activity and associated anti-social behaviour. This Bill builds on recent initiatives by the Government on these matters by creating new offences, with related powers of forfeiture, dealing with the very specific problem of persons concealing cigarettes within motor vehicles."