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**Floating shabu came from large crime ring—PDEA**

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A group of men standing next to a body of water

AI-generated content may be incorrect.CATCH OF THE DAY. Fisherfolk turn over to authorities suspected shabu they found floating off the coasts of Bolinao and Agno towns in Pangasinan on Friday, June 6, 2025. Philippine Coast Guard-Pangasinan

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THE Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) on Tuesday identified a large international crime syndicate named Sam Gor as primarily responsible for the dumping of over one ton of shabu discovered by local fishermen drifting in the coastal areas of Zambales, Pangasinan and Ilocos Sur.

“Sam Gor is a five-drug triad alliance namely, the 14K, Bamboo Union, Big Circle Gang, Sun Yeen On and Wo Shing Wo, whose leaders are based in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Their members simply called it ‘The Company,’” PDEA director general Isagani Nerez said.

Sam Gor allegedly operated in various countries across the Asia-Pacific Region, including the Philippines. The crime ring was believed largely involved in trafficking shabu with an estimated 40 to 70 percent control of the drug market in the region, PDEA said.

The syndicate is raking up annual profits surpassing the $17-billion mark.

Apart from shabu, Sam Gor is also into heroin, ketamine, other synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals, the PDEA said.

PDEA said Sam Gor was named after its suspected founder Tse Chi Lop, a Chinese-Canadian who was arrested four years ago in the Netherlands and was eventually extradited to Australia in December 2022 to face drug trafficking charges.

He is considered Asia’s El Chapo.

“Based on the packaging of the shabu recovered in Philippine shores, they were contained in teabags with Chinese markings — a signature trademark associated with Sam Gor,”  Nerez said.

“Sam Gor gained notoriety by engaging in all sorts of unconventional methods of drug smuggling, including the use of the high seas. They dump their illicit goods to be retrieved later by contact local cohorts. It’s a good thing that our hero fishermen got there first before the drugs fell into the wrong hands,” he added.

Some 56 local fishermen surrendered a total of 1,038 kilos of suspected shabu worth more than P7 billion in 40 turnover incidents to authorities as of June 9, marking one of the country’s largest maritime seizures of illegal drugs in recent years.

The shabu packs were found washed ashore in the coastal areas of Dacap Sur, Bani; Boboy and Macaboboni, Agno; and Luciente I, Balingasay, Concordia and Poblacion, Bolinao — all located in Pangasinan and Barangay Mantanas and Dili, Sta Cruz in Ilocos Sur.

On May 29, some P1.5 billion worth of shabu were also found off Masinloc, Zambales and surrendered to the authorities by 10 fishermen from Bataan.