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Tse Chi Lop: Alleged Asian drug lord arrested in Amsterdam

24 January 2021

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Tse Chi Lop was arrested at Amsterdam airport on Friday

**Police in the Netherlands have arrested the alleged head of one of the world's biggest drugs gangs, on a warrant issued by Australia.**

Tse Chi Lop - a Chinese-born Canadian national - is said to be the head of The Company, which dominates a $70bn illegal drugs market across Asia.

Listed as one of the world's most wanted fugitives, Mr Tse was detained at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport.

Australia will now seek his extradition to face trial there.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) believe The Company, also known as the Sam Gor Syndicate, is responsible for up to 70% of all illegal drugs entering the country.

The 56-year-old has been compared to the Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman because of the scale of his alleged enterprise.

* [How Mexico's drug kingpin fell victim to his own legend](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-35271257)

Australian police had reportedly been tracking Mr Tse for more than a decade before he was arrested on Friday as he was about to board a flight to Canada.

A police statement, which did not name Mr Tse, said [the arrest warrant was issued in 2019](https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/media-releases/canadian-national-arrested-netherlands-afp-arrest-warrant), with police in the Netherlands acting on an Interpol notice.

"He was already on the most-wanted list and he was detained based on intelligence we received," a Dutch police spokesman of the arrest Friday.

[Reuters published a special investigation into Mr Tse in 2019](https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/meth-syndicate/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=twitter) - describing him as "Asia's most wanted man".

The news agency cited UN estimates as saying the syndicate's revenue from methamphetamine sales alone could have been as high as $17bn in 2018.

The effort to arrest Mr Tse, Operation Kungur, involved about 20 agencies from continents across the globe with AFP taking the lead, according to Reuters.

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Mr Tse is rumoured to have moved between Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan in recent years.

He previously spent nine years in prison after being arrested on drug trafficking charges in the US in the 1990s.

Australian media described his arrest as the "most important" for the country's federal police in two decades.

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