

News release

Former Chief Constable joins British American Tobacco's fight against global tobacco trafficking

20 May 2013



Sir Ronnie Flanagan

British American Tobacco has today announced the appointment of Sir Ronnie Flanagan as its new external consultant and advisor on tackling the illegal tobacco trade.

Sir Ronnie, a highly respected global policing, organised crime and counter terrorism expert, brings a wealth of experience to the role having previously served in a number of high profile positions. These include serving as Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary which became the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and as the country's most senior police officer as the Home Office Chief Inspector of Constabulary for the United Kingdom.

The main focus of Sir Ronnie's role at British American Tobacco, will be to advise on and advocate the company's global strategy for tackling the trafficking of illegal tobacco –something that accounted for the sale of 660 billion illegal cigarettes in 2012 alone and costs governments around the world approximately \$40bn a year in lost taxes.

Today's black market in tobacco involves criminal gangs producing counterfeit cigarettes, cross-border smuggling and large-scale tax evasion that governments can little afford in these challenging economic times. Up to 12% of global tobacco sales are estimated to be illegal, making cigarettes one of the most commonly traded products on the black market. When combined, the global illegal market is roughly equivalent in size to the world's third largest multinational tobacco company by volume.

Sir Ronnie commented: "There is a misconception that tobacco trafficking is a 'victimless crime'. This is wrong. It is now a multi-billion dollar, global business run by serious crime organisations. It funds all manner of criminality, including gun smuggling, people trafficking and drugs, and is also linked to the funding of terrorism - something that governments are becoming increasingly aware of.

"I know the misery that tobacco trafficking creates and am pleased to be working with British American Tobacco which is taking a lead role in fighting it. I am fully committed to doing everything in my power to alert people around the world that this is a fight we simply must win."

Pat Heneghan, Global Head of Anti-Illicit Trade at British American Tobacco, said: "We are delighted to have Sir Ronnie on board to help in our fight against tobacco trafficking.

“We believe Sir Ronnie will be a major asset to British American Tobacco and the industry in general. He fully understands the seriousness of the illegal tobacco trade and shares our belief that the tobacco industry, governments, law enforcement agencies and customs officials around the world must work collaboratively to defeat it.”

In a distinguished career, Sir Ronnie joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in 1970, before being appointed Chief Constable. He then continued as the first Chief Constable of the RUC's successor, the PSNI, before taking up his Home Office role.

In addition, Sir Ronnie has held a variety of policing posts in the Middle East. He also succeeded Lord Condon as Chairman of the International Cricket Council's Anti-Corruption & Security Unit.

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