



OFFICE *of the* UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

# 2024 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy

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# Overview of the Results of the 2024 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy

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Commercial-scale copyright piracy and trademark counterfeiting<sup>1</sup> cause significant financial losses for U.S. right holders and legitimate businesses, undermine critical U.S. comparative advantages in innovation and creativity to the detriment of American workers, and pose significant risks to consumer health and safety. The 2024 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy (Notorious Markets List, or NML) highlights prominent and illustrative examples of online and physical markets that reportedly engage in, facilitate, turn a blind eye to, or benefit from substantial piracy or counterfeiting. A goal of the NML is to motivate appropriate action by the private sector and governments to reduce piracy and counterfeiting.

The NML includes an Issue Focus section. For 2024, the Issue Focus examines illicit online pharmacies and the risks of counterfeit medicines. Counterfeit medicines pose a significant health and safety risk to consumers, and the growing market of illicit online pharmacies has increased the spread of these dangerous counterfeits.

The NML also includes Positive Developments, Online Markets, and Physical Markets sections. The Positive Developments section identifies actions that governments and private entities have taken this past year to reduce piracy and counterfeiting. The Online Markets and Physical Markets sections highlight markets that require further actions.

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) highlights certain online and physical markets because they exemplify global counterfeiting and piracy concerns and because the scale of infringing activity in these markets can cause significant harm to U.S. intellectual property (IP) owners, workers, consumers, and the economy. Some of the identified markets reportedly host a combination of legitimate and unauthorized activities. Others openly or reportedly exist solely to engage in or facilitate unauthorized activity.

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<sup>1</sup>The terms “copyright piracy” and “trademark counterfeiting” appear below as “piracy” and “counterfeiting,” respectively.

This year's NML includes several previously identified markets because owners, operators, and governments failed to address the stated concerns. Other previously identified markets may not appear in the NML for a variety of reasons, including that the market has closed or its popularity or significance has diminished; enforcement or voluntary action has significantly reduced the prevalence of IP-infringing goods or services; market owners or operators are cooperating with right holders or government authorities to address infringement; or the market is no longer a noteworthy example of its kind. In some cases, physical and online markets in the 2023 NML are not highlighted this year, but improvements are still needed, and the United States may continue to raise concerns related to these markets on a bilateral basis with the relevant countries.

The NML is not an exhaustive account of all physical and online markets worldwide in which IP infringement may take place. The NML does not make findings of legal violations nor does it reflect the U.S. Government's analysis of the general IP protection and enforcement climate in the countries connected with the listed markets. A broader analysis of IP protection and enforcement in particular countries or economies is presented in the annual Special 301 Report published at the end of April each year.

USTR developed the NML under the auspices of the annual Special 301 process<sup>2</sup> and solicited comments through a Request for Public Comments published in the Federal Register (<https://www.regulations.gov>, Docket Number USTR-2024-0013). The NML is based predominantly on publicly available information. USTR has identified notorious markets in the Special 301 Report since 2006. In 2010, USTR announced that it would begin publishing the NML separately from the annual Special 301 Report, pursuant to an out-of-cycle review. USTR first separately published the NML in February 2011.

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<sup>2</sup>Please refer to the Public Information section for links to information and resources related to Special 301.

# Issue Focus: Illicit Online Pharmacies and Counterfeit Medicines, a Growing Threat to Public Health

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*Each year, the Issue Focus section of the NML highlights an issue related to the facilitation of substantial counterfeiting or piracy. Past issue focus sections highlighted the potential health and safety risks posed by counterfeit goods to consumers (2023), the adverse impact of online piracy on workers (2022), the adverse impact on workers involved in the manufacture of counterfeit goods (2021), e-commerce and the role of Internet platforms in facilitating the importation of counterfeit and pirated goods into the United States (2020), and malware and online piracy (2019).*

USTR continues to execute the Biden-Harris Administration's vision of a worker-centered approach to trade policy that grows the economy from the middle out and the bottom up. This approach is one that focuses on the needs and challenges of our people.

This year's NML Issue Focus highlights the risks and growing availability of counterfeit medicines, which has been driven by the proliferation of illicit online pharmacies. The rise in popularity of e-commerce has transformed many aspects of daily life, including how people purchase medications. Online pharmacies have emerged as a convenient solution for individuals who seek easy access to medications from the comfort of their homes. This trend, which was already gaining traction, saw an explosive increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the demand for medical supplies and prescription medications surged alongside general online shopping.<sup>3</sup> Online pharmacies were able to offer Americans access to both prescription and non-prescription medication, arriving directly to their doorstep.

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<sup>3</sup> National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, 2020. COVID-19 and the Surge of Online Pharmacy Usage. <https://nabp.pharmacy/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Rogue-Rx-Activity-Report-May-2020-1.pdf>

Legitimate online pharmacies allow patients to benefit from fast access to medical information and medications online. Legitimate pharmacies, both physical and online, are licensed in the United States through local state pharmacy boards, which also regulate the pharmacists, technicians, suppliers, distributors, and other parties involved in providing medicines to consumers.<sup>4</sup> As is the case with a legitimate physical pharmacy, a legitimate online pharmacy will require a doctor's prescription and will have a licensed pharmacist available to answer questions.<sup>5</sup> Legitimate online pharmacies can be standalone companies or online extensions of established chains.

However, as was discussed in the Issue Focus in the 2020 NML, the online environment has opened the door to bad actors who engage in illegal activities. Illicit online pharmacies are not licensed and operate outside of governing laws, regulations, and inspection systems. Similar to other forms of illegal trade and counterfeit markets, it is difficult to assess the quality and safety of products that are sold. A common identifier of illicit online pharmacies is the sale of a prescription drug without any requirement to provide proof of a valid prescription. A 2016 study highlights that drugs sold from illicit online pharmacies are more likely to be counterfeit and made from substandard, unregulated, and potentially dangerous materials.<sup>6</sup>

Medicines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in the United States have been reviewed for safety, quality, and effectiveness, and federal and state laws create a closed drug distribution system that helps ensure the U.S. prescription drug supply is safe. Counterfeit medicines are manufactured and sold outside regulatory oversight, deliberately evading compliance with safety standards and quality control. Just as with other counterfeit goods, medicines bearing counterfeit trademarks are products that are deliberately and fraudulently mislabeled to look like legitimate well-known brands.<sup>7</sup> These counterfeit

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<sup>4</sup> See Virginia Department of Health Professions, Board of Pharmacy for an example of a state licensing process <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/Boards/Pharmacy/AbouttheBoard/ListofRegulatedProfessions/>.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2024. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/besafex-your-source-online-pharmacy-information/locate-state-licensed-online-pharmacy>

<sup>6</sup> Mackey, Tim et al., 2016. Digital danger: a review of the global public health, patient safety and cybersecurity threats posed by illicit online pharmacies. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5127424/>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 2024. <https://www.uspto.gov/ip-policy/enforcement-policy/counterfeit-medications>



medicines are trading on the reliable reputation of a legitimate product, but they are often made with substandard, dangerous, and potentially deadly materials. U.S. brands are the most popular targets for counterfeiters of medical products, and counterfeit U.S.-brand medicines account for 38 percent of global counterfeit medicine seizures.<sup>8</sup>

The threat of counterfeit medicines being sold online is a pressing issue that can pose severe health and safety risks for consumers.<sup>9</sup> In fact, in October 2024, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) both issued a public safety alert warning about illegal online pharmacies selling and shipping counterfeit pills to consumers who believe they are purchasing real pharmaceutical drugs.<sup>10</sup> This Issue Focus will explore the rise of illicit online pharmacies, the risks they pose to consumers, and the steps needed to address the growing problem of counterfeit drugs.

## **I. The Prevalence of Illicit Online Pharmacies**

The convenience of e-commerce makes online pharmacies a very appealing option for many consumers, but the ability of bad actors to avoid regulatory authorities makes the online environment fertile ground for illegal activity. Statistics from the Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP) reveal that 20 new illicit pharmacy websites are created every day. These websites may look legitimate, purportedly offering brand-name drugs at discounted prices, but they bypass regulations designed to protect consumers by operating without a license, selling medications without prescriptions, without safety warnings, and without proper oversight of the drugs being distributed. Among the estimated 35,000 online pharmacies operating worldwide, a staggering 96 percent operate in violation of the law.<sup>11</sup> Illicit online pharmacy websites will often mimic a legitimate e-commerce platform with features like product navigation, a cart system,

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<sup>8</sup> OECD/EUIPO, Trade in Counterfeit Pharmaceutical Products at 35 (Mar. 2020), <http://www.oecd.org/gov/tradein-counterfeit-pharmaceutical-products-a7c7e054-en.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2024. Counterfeit Medicine May Be Harmful. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/buying-using-medicine-safely/counterfeit-medicine>

<sup>10</sup> See DEA, 2024. <https://www.dea.gov/alert/dea-issues-warning-about-illegal-online-pharmacies> and CDC, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2024/s1002-counterfeit-prescription-online-pharmacies.html>

<sup>11</sup> Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP), 2017. ASOP Online Pharmacy Consumer Behavior and Perception Survey. <https://buysaferx.pharmacy/public-awareness-campaigns/drug-importation/factsheets/online-pharmacy-consumer-behavior-and-perception-survey/>

“About Us” pages, privacy policies, and even false assurances of FDA approval, misleading consumers into trusting the legitimacy of the products they are purchasing. A 2023 survey conducted by the ASOP Global Foundation found that 54 percent of respondents mistakenly believed that all online pharmacies are FDA-approved. Among those who had previously purchased prescription medications online, this misperception was more common at 63 percent. As with other forms of counterfeit marketplaces, illicit online pharmacies seek to exploit consumers who believe they are purchasing legitimate products when they may actually be purchasing highly risky counterfeit drugs.<sup>12</sup>

## **II. The Dangers of Counterfeit Medicines from Illicit Online Pharmacies**

Given the prevalence of counterfeit medicines on these websites, the risks of purchasing medications from illicit online pharmacies are numerous and potentially life-threatening. The FDA recognizes the danger of purported prescription drugs purchased from illicit online pharmacies and has issued over a hundred warning letters to these unlicensed pharmacies, noting in each warning letter that “drugs that have circumvented regulatory safeguards may be contaminated, counterfeit, contain varying amounts of active ingredients, or contain different ingredients altogether.”<sup>13</sup> In its 2023 survey, the ASOP Global Foundation found that a growing number of Americans are being exposed to risks from medications purchased online. The survey revealed that 24 percent of Americans with prior experience using online pharmacies reported first-hand exposure to substandard, counterfeit, or harmful medication from an illicit online pharmacy, an increase of 7 percent from the same survey conducted in 2021.<sup>14</sup> Counterfeit medicines can be manufactured with inert or substandard ingredients, but are sold to unknowing consumers who believe they are buying a legitimate medication with the quality and

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<sup>12</sup> Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP) Global Foundation, 2023. Americans’ Perceptions and Use of Online Pharmacies. [ASOP-Foundation-Consumer-Behavior-Survey-Key-Findings-2023.pdf](#)

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2024. Internet Pharmacy Warning Letters. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-supply-chain-integrity/internet-pharmacy-warning-letters#table>

<sup>14</sup> Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP) Global Foundation, 2023. Americans’ Perceptions and Use of Online Pharmacies. [ASOP-Foundation-Consumer-Behavior-Survey-Key-Findings-2023.pdf](#)

effectiveness of a trusted brand. Expert chemical analysis is often required to detect counterfeit medicines, making it difficult for consumers to identify the potential for danger.<sup>15</sup>

Counterfeit medications may contain harmful ingredients or the wrong dosage of active ingredients, leading to severe health consequences.<sup>16</sup> In some cases, the drugs may contain no active ingredients at all, rendering them useless for treating the conditions they are meant to address. More than a decade ago, the FDA was already warning the public of instances of counterfeit Adderall, commonly used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), being sold online. The counterfeit pills had been found to contain the wrong active ingredients for the medication, making them ineffective for their intended use.<sup>17</sup> For a more recent example, in 2021 a husband and wife in New Jersey admitted to selling misbranded and unapproved drugs online, many of which had no therapeutic value.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, there have been reports of counterfeit cancer drugs sold online that contained no active ingredients, leaving patients without the treatment they thought they were receiving.<sup>19</sup> Counterfeit medications that do not contain the correct dosage of active ingredients may lead to dangerous drug interactions or allergic reactions. In some cases, the consumption of counterfeit medicines has led to severe side effects, including death.<sup>20</sup> Even when the counterfeit drug contains the correct active ingredient, it may be mixed with harmful substances or manufactured in unsanitary conditions, thereby posing a health risk to consumers.

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<sup>15</sup> OECD/EUIPO, 2020. Illicit Trade: Trade in Counterfeit Pharmaceutical Products. <https://doi.org/10.1787/a7c7e054-en>.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2024. Counterfeit Medicine May Be Harmful. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/buying-using-medicine-safely/counterfeit-medicine>

<sup>17</sup> Reuters, 2012. Fake ADHD drug Adderall sold online, U.S. FDA warns. <https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/29/us-drugs-fda-adderall-idUSBRE84S1FO20120529/>

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, 2021. New Jersey Couple Sentenced for Illegal Sale of Misbranded Drugs Online. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-nj/pr/new-jersey-husband-and-wife-admit-selling-misbranded-and-unapproved-new-drugs>

<sup>19</sup> CBC News, 2021, February 19. Doctors guilty of supplying counterfeit cancer drugs. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/doctors-guilty-counterfeit-cancer-drugs-wfpcbc-cbc-1.5922059>

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2024. Counterfeit Medicine May Be Harmful. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/buying-using-medicine-safely/counterfeit-medicine>

### III. Enforcement Against Counterfeiting

Strong enforcement measures exist in the United States to combat the growing threat of counterfeit medicines. U.S. government agencies work to detect and deter bad actors and protect public health, applying enforcement measures like criminal penalties, including significant monetary fines and prison sentences to deter counterfeiters. In September 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced the unsealing of charges against 18 individuals for allegedly selling, manufacturing, and shipping millions of pills disguised as legitimate pharmaceuticals. If convicted, the defendants face a mandatory minimum of 20 years in prison and a maximum penalty of life in prison. The DOJ announcement also stated that federal authorities have seized nine website domains used by the defendants and their co-conspirators to sell counterfeit pills and seized hundreds of pounds of counterfeit pills.<sup>21</sup> In a notable 2020 case, the CEO of a nationwide dark net drug trafficking organization was sentenced to life in prison for the manufacture and sale of more than a half million counterfeit pills throughout the United States. U.S. government special agents investigated the case and found that as CEO, the individual imported ingredients, including fentanyl, from China, used them to manufacture counterfeit drugs, and then distributed the counterfeit drugs using an illicit online pharmacy called PHARMA-MASTER.<sup>22</sup> A 2018 investigation found that a collective of Canadian companies had circumvented the FDA approval process to operate an illicit online pharmacy that shipped unapproved, misbranded, and counterfeit prescription drugs into the United States. The companies were sentenced to five years of probation, ordered to forfeit all websites, and forced to forfeit \$29 million of proceeds. The leader of the illegal operation was sentenced to pay a fine of \$250,000 and to five years of probation with the first six months in home confinement.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, 2024. U.S. Attorney Announces Charges Against 18 Defendants In Scheme To Manufacture And Distribute Millions Of Deadly Counterfeit Pharmaceuticals Through Fake Online Pharmacies. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/us-attorney-announces-charges-against-18-defendants-scheme-manufacture-and-distribute>

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, 2020. Shamo Sentenced To Life In Prison After Conviction For Organizing, Directing Drug Trafficking Organization. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ut/pr/shamo-sentenced-life-prison-after-conviction-organizing-directing-drug-trafficking>

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, 2018. Canadian Drug Firm Admits Selling Counterfeit and Misbranded Prescription Drugs Throughout the United States. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mt/pr/canadian-drug-firm-admits-selling-counterfeit-and-misbranded-prescription-drugs>

FDA's Office of Criminal Investigations (OCI) Cybercrime Investigations Unit conducts investigations on the surface Internet, which is the Internet that is publicly and easily accessible through standard search engines, as well as dark web marketplaces where website operators attempt to hide online illegal activity, successfully disrupting and dismantling illicit online pharmacies selling counterfeit drugs, including fentanyl, through arrests and asset seizures. For example, in fiscal year 2017, OCI's efforts led to court ordered seizures of 4,229 Internet domain names selling misbranded, adulterated, and counterfeit devices and drugs, including illicit opioids.<sup>24</sup>

The profusion of foreign-based illicit online pharmacies presents authorities with difficulties in stemming the flow of counterfeit drugs into the United States, and bad actors will often falsify customs forms to avoid detection. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspects incoming packages imported to the U.S., seizing millions of counterfeit goods, including counterfeit medicines. In fiscal year 2023, CBP seized more pharmaceutical items than any other single category of counterfeit good, with over 1.5 million items seized.<sup>25</sup> For drug products, including suspected counterfeit medicines, CBP flags the package for expert inspection and analysis from the FDA. In fiscal year 2021 for example, the FDA reviewed nearly 70,000 drug products at international mail facilities, including opioids.<sup>26</sup>

One of the biggest challenges in enforcement is that many illicit online pharmacies are based outside of the United States, limiting the regulatory and enforcement abilities of U.S. agencies. The United States has been a strong advocate for enhanced enforcement efforts, urging its trading partners to provide law enforcement with the tools needed to combat counterfeiting. The United States continues to urge trading partners to undertake more effective criminal and border enforcement against the manufacture, import, export, transit, and

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<sup>24</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2018. Stopping the Poison Pills: Combatting The Trafficking Of Illegal Fentanyl From China. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/congressional-testimony/stopping-poison-pills-combatting-trafficking-illegal-fentanyl-china-10022018>

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2023. Intellectual Property Rights Seizure Stats. <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/ipr-seizure-stats-fy23-508.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2022. Remarks by FDA Commissioner Robert Califf to the 2022 Rx and Illicit Drug Summit. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/speeches-fda-officials/remarks-fda-commissioner-robert-califf-2022-rx-and-illicit-drug-summit-04202022>

distribution of counterfeit goods. The United States engages with its trading partners through bilateral consultations, trade agreements, and international organizations to help ensure that penalties, such as significant monetary fines and meaningful sentences of imprisonment, are available and applied to deter counterfeiting. In addition, trading partners should ensure that competent authorities seize and destroy counterfeit goods, including counterfeit medicines, as well as the materials and implements used for their production, thereby removing them from the channels of commerce and preventing these potentially dangerous products from reaching consumers. As counterfeiters continue to evolve their methods, law enforcement agencies must also adapt, utilizing advanced technology and intelligence to track and dismantle counterfeit drug networks.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Counterfeit medicines pose a significant health and safety risk to consumers, and the proliferation of illicit online pharmacies has only made these dangerous counterfeits easier to obtain. Like the falsified branding of the medicines they sell, illicit online pharmacies seek to appear as legitimate platforms to exploit the misplaced trust of unaware consumers. Counterfeit medicines are manufactured outside the strict regulatory and inspection systems of genuine pharmaceuticals, and they are then sold through platforms also operating outside the law and evading oversight. Consumers must continue to be made aware of the risks associated with purchasing medications through illicit unlicensed online pharmacies and strong enforcement measures must continue to be implemented to combat the growing threat of counterfeit drugs. Adequate and effective enforcement against counterfeiting plays a key role in reducing the potential dangers of counterfeit products, including counterfeit medicines.

# Positive Developments

## Since the 2023 Notorious Markets List

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Since the release of the 2023 Notorious Markets List, there have been notable efforts to address the widespread availability of counterfeit and pirated goods in some online and physical markets. The United States commends these efforts and encourages governments, right holders, service providers, and the owners and operators of these and other markets, including those newly identified in the 2024 NML, to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts to combat piracy and counterfeiting.<sup>27</sup>

### **Enforcement Activities: Pirated Content**

During the past year, several successful enforcement efforts focused on online piracy markets. Actions against pirate streaming services, including wholesale pirate stream suppliers and resellers of pirate-enabled Internet Protocol television (IPTV) applications and physical illicit streaming devices (ISDs), continued this past year.<sup>28</sup>

In Vietnam, the Hanoi Police collaborated with U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) International Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (ICHIP) program, and the Alliance for Creativity and Entertainment (ACE) to shut down the site Fmovies and associated piracy sites in July and August 2024. Right holders commended the Hanoi Police for this action to shut down the world's largest piracy ring after a multi-year investigation, noting that domains controlled by the piracy operation drew more than 6.7 billion visits between January 2023 and June 2024. The Hanoi Police has sought prosecution of two suspects from the Fmovies case, and right holders urge enforcement authorities to move this

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<sup>27</sup> References to foreign governments' judicial and law enforcement actions to address piracy and counterfeiting provide helpful factual context to the listings in this year's NML but should not necessarily be interpreted as the U.S. government's endorsement of the particular means used therein.

<sup>28</sup> IPTV-based piracy generally occurs by means of an application which can be installed on hardware that is sold directly to the consumer, such as an ISD, or installed directly to a user's own device such as a smart TV, smartphone, tablet, or game console. Pirate IPTV services are often offered on a subscription basis at prices that are far lower than licensed providers could ever offer

case through the criminal process without delay and impose suitably deterrent sentences for any violations found. Fmovies had been included in the Notorious Market List since 2017.

Another positive development from Vietnam was the conviction of the operator of BestBuyIPTV in the People's Court of Hanoi, which was the result of another investigative collaboration with HSI, the DOJ ICHIP program, and ACE. This case marks the first conviction in Vietnam in a criminal copyright infringement case. After pleading guilty, the operator received a suspended sentence of 30 months in prison and was also ordered to pay a criminal fine of about \$4,000 and \$12,000 in restitution, as well as forfeit \$24,000 in illegal profits.<sup>29</sup> Right holders welcomed the landmark case as a significant step forward in combating online piracy in Vietnam and sending a clear message that piracy will not be tolerated. BestBuyIPTV had been included in the Notorious Market List since 2019.

In September 2024, Brazil conducted its seventh anti-piracy Operation 404 since 2019 focusing on music stream-ripping websites and apps in Paraguay and Brazil. Stakeholders and enforcement authorities from across the world, including from Argentina, the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Peru, collaborated with enforcement authorities in Brazil and Paraguay on this latest Operation 404.<sup>30</sup> In March 2024, a pirate IPTV service operator that was a subject of the second Operation 404 was criminally prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced to prison.<sup>31</sup> In other enforcement efforts, Dutch anti-piracy group BREIN conducted 615 investigations that resulted in the shutdown of 610 piracy sites and services.<sup>32</sup> In the United Kingdom, authorities arrested a number of individuals for their involvement in online piracy through illicit streaming operations, including one who was sentenced to four years and nine months in jail for advertising and selling specially-configured set-top boxes that gave viewers

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<sup>29</sup> TorrentFreak, 2024. 'BestBuyIPTV' Operator Sentenced in Vietnam's First Ever Online Piracy Conviction. <https://torrentfreak.com/bestbuyiptv-operator-sentenced-in-vietnams-first-ever-piracy-conviction-240422/>

<sup>30</sup> IFPI, 2024. 'Operation 404' continues to tackle infringing music services in Brazil and Paraguay. <https://www.ifpi.org/operation-404-continues-to-tackle-infringing-music-services-in-brazil-and-paraguay/>

<sup>31</sup> Telaviva, 2024. Brazil hands down first conviction for IPTV piracy crimes. <https://telaviva.com.br/26/03/2024/brasil-profere-primeira-condenacao-por-crimes-de-pirataria-de-iptv/?amp>

<sup>32</sup> BREIN, 2024. Annual Report 2023. <https://stichtingbrein.nl/annual-report-2023/>



access to illegal streaming content.<sup>33</sup> In November 2024, Operation Taken Down, an investigation directed by the Catania District Attorney's Office in Italy involving Europol, Eurojust, and other law enforcement agencies across Europe, as well as the Audiovisual Anti-Piracy Alliance (AAPA), reportedly dismantled an international pirate IPTV network serving 22 million users and generating an estimated €3 billion, or approximately \$3.12 billion, per year.<sup>34</sup>

### **Enforcement Activities: Counterfeit Goods**

Several countries have notably increased enforcement efforts in physical marketplaces and coordination with right holders to effectively reduce counterfeit activity. For example, in Argentina, the Federal Police Force carried out 292 operations across the country to combat the sale of counterfeit goods from November 2023 to September 2024. As a result of these operations, police arrested 19 people and seized a multitude of counterfeit goods including sports apparel, shoes, watches, and cell phone cases. The Federal Police also trained 70 agents on intellectual property rights enforcement.

In June 2024, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) of Kuwait executed the largest bust of IP-infringing goods in Kuwaiti history, confiscating more than 623,000 accessories, purses, clothing items, and shoes worth approximately \$32.5 million. MOCI says the goods, all counterfeit designer products, were not destined for bona fide brand boutiques but intended for sale online to customers that were likely aware the merchandise was fake. Kuwait was removed from the Special 301 Watch List in 2019, and this landmark operation underscores Kuwait's continued willingness to take prompt and comprehensive action that supports IP enforcement.

The Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP HL) reported a record increase in the value of seized counterfeit goods from ports of entry, physical markets, and warehouses, totaling an estimated \$617.8 million from January to September 2024, surpassing last year's \$471.4 million total. An IPOP HL official noted that the increase in seizures reflects the Philippine government's improved enforcement efforts and better coordination with right owners rather

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<sup>33</sup> The Independent, 2024. Illegal streamers sent to prison and others arrested in major piracy crackdown. <https://www.the-independent.com/tech/online-piracy-illegal-streaming-prison-b2565917.html>

<sup>34</sup> TorrentFreak, 2024. €3bn Pirate IPTV Network Serving 22m Users "Dismantled" in Massive Operation. <https://torrentfreak.com/e3bn-pirate-iptv-network-serving-22m-users-dismantled-in-massive-operation-241127/>

than increased illicit trade, and also highlighted that IPOPHL works closely with local government officials to further reduce counterfeit goods in their cities.

Enforcement officials in Paraguay have strengthened information sharing and coordination on enforcement actions among Paraguayan government agencies and regional partners through increased use of the Intellectual Property Rights Interagency Coordination Center (CODEPI). One such multi-agency enforcement action was against a factory in Ciudad del Este that manufactured counterfeit footwear. More than 15,000 pairs of counterfeit name-brand shoes were seized in this operation. CODEPI also began publishing the IP enforcement results from the National Directorate of Intellectual Property (DINAPI), customs, police and prosecutors.

### **Studies and Reports**

Several studies published this year addressed global trade in counterfeit and pirated goods. In April 2024, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Secretariat published a report titled “Illicit Trade in Fakes under the COVID-19.” This report was prepared by the OECD and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) to provide insight into the observed trends of illicit trade in counterfeits during the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance our understanding of the risk that counterfeiting poses to the global economy and society. It contains detailed quantitative information on the value of trade in counterfeits in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and also discusses profound shifts in consumer demand and the proliferation of e-commerce, changes in enforcement priorities, and reshuffling of value chains.<sup>35</sup>

The OECD also published another report in July 2024 titled “Illicit Trade and the Korean Economy.” This report examines the global trade in counterfeit products that infringe on Korean IP rights and its impact on the Korean economy, and concludes that the infringement of Korean IP rights poses a significant threat to the Korean economy.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> OECD, 2024. Illicit Trade in Fakes under the COVID-19. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/illicit-trade-in-fakes-under-the-covid-19\\_0c475a23-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/illicit-trade-in-fakes-under-the-covid-19_0c475a23-en.html)

<sup>36</sup> OECD, 2024. Illicit Trade and the Korean Economy. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/illicit-trade-and-the-korean-economy\\_bc0bdd4a-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/illicit-trade-and-the-korean-economy_bc0bdd4a-en.html)

EUIPO published a study in November 2024 titled “Online copyright infringement in the European Union – films, music, publications, software and TV (2017-2023),” which provides an analysis of web-based illegal consumption of protected TV, music, film, software and publications content within the EU Member States.<sup>37</sup>

In January 2024, MUSO, a private technology company focused on measuring global piracy, released its whitepaper titled “The Global Piracy By Industry 2023 Report,” highlighting the trends in global piracy across all major sectors in the entertainment in 2023.<sup>38</sup>

In June 2024, the World Customs Organization (WCO) announced the release of the Illicit Trade Report 2023. This annual report provides an analysis of the current state and evolving trends of illicit trade, including trade of counterfeit goods, and covers several critical areas for enforcement activities, including exploring the role of customs in preventing the illicit trafficking of prohibited and restricted goods, including counterfeit goods.<sup>39</sup>

The United States commends these efforts, appreciates studies being done in this area, and encourages its trading partners to continue their individual and collective efforts to combat counterfeiting and piracy.

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<sup>37</sup> EUIPO, 2024. Online copyright infringement in the European Union – films, music, publications, software and TV (2017-2023). <https://www.euipo.europa.eu/en/publications/online-copyright-infringement-in-the-european-union-films-music-publications-software-and-tv-2017-2023>

<sup>38</sup> MUSO, 2023. The Piracy By Industry 2023 Report. <https://www.muso.com/piracy-by-industry-report-2023>

<sup>39</sup> WCO, 2024. Illicit Trade Report 2023. <https://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/resources/publications.aspx>

# Results of the

## 2024 Review of Notorious Markets

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The Notorious Markets List identifies prominent and illustrative examples of online and physical markets in which pirated or counterfeit goods and services reportedly are available or that facilitate, turn a blind eye to, or benefit from substantial piracy and counterfeiting. It does not constitute a legal finding of a violation or an analysis of the general IP protection and enforcement environment in any country or economy. The NML is not an exhaustive inventory of all notorious markets around the world. Markets on the NML are drawn from the many nominations received as well as other input, such as from U.S. embassies, in order to highlight prominent examples of both online and physical markets where pirated or counterfeit goods and services reportedly are trafficked to the detriment of legitimate trade in IP-intensive goods and services.

Owners and operators of notorious markets that are willing to address counterfeiting and piracy have many options for doing so. Such owners and operators can, for example, adopt business models that rely on the licensed distribution of legitimate content and can negotiate appropriate licenses with right holders. If an otherwise legitimate business has become a platform for piracy or counterfeiting, the owner or operator can work with right holders and law enforcement officials to help discourage and curtail acts of infringement. Industry groups have developed a variety of best practices that can help combat counterfeiting and piracy.<sup>40</sup> In the absence of good faith efforts, responsible government authorities should investigate reports of piracy and counterfeiting in these and similar markets and pursue appropriate action against such markets and their owners and operators. Governments should also ensure that appropriate

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<sup>40</sup> E.g., International Trademark Association, Addressing the Sale of Counterfeits on the Internet (June 2021), [https://www.inta.org/wp-content/uploads/public-files/advocacy/committee-reports/Addressing\\_the\\_Sale\\_of\\_Counterfeits\\_on\\_the\\_Internet\\_June\\_2021\\_edit.pdf](https://www.inta.org/wp-content/uploads/public-files/advocacy/committee-reports/Addressing_the_Sale_of_Counterfeits_on_the_Internet_June_2021_edit.pdf); ICC/BASCAP, Roles and Responsibilities of Intermediaries: Fighting Counterfeiting and Piracy in the Supply Chain (Mar. 2015), <https://2go.iccwbo.org/roles-and-responsibilities-of-intermediaries-fighting-counterfeiting-and-piracy-in-the-supply-chain-2015.html>.

enforcement tools are at the disposal of right holders and government authorities, which may require closing loopholes that permit operators to evade enforcement actions.

## Online Markets

The 2024 Notorious Markets List identifies examples of various technologies,<sup>41</sup> obfuscation methods, revenue models, and consumer harms associated with infringing activity. USTR bases its selections not on specific types of technologies, but on whether the owners, operators, or users of a nominated market or affiliated network of markets reportedly engage in or facilitate substantial piracy or counterfeiting to the detriment of U.S. creators and companies.

Many of those who submitted public comments this year highlighted the complex ecosystem—including domain name registries and registrars, reverse proxy and other anonymization services, hosting providers, caching services, advertisers and advertisement placement networks, payment processors, social media platforms, search engines, and network management infrastructure—that providers of pirated content abuse. Each component in this ecosystem can play a role in facilitating or reducing piracy, which in 2019 cost the U.S. economy an estimated \$29.2 billion in lost revenue.<sup>42</sup>

This year, the NML continues to reflect right holders concerns with the prevalence of cyberlocker sites to facilitate the storage and distribution of pirated content. Cyberlockers act as the hosting and content storage sites for the world's most popular piracy streaming and linking websites. The streaming sites highlighted in this year's NML depend on the storage capabilities of the cyberlockers also listed here. Right holders emphasized that cyberlocker sites typically depend on advertising for revenue and are thus incentivized to drive more traffic to their sites by

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<sup>41</sup> For simplicity, the NML uses terminology that links alleged copyright and trademark infringement to specific technologies (e.g., websites). However, the focus of the NML is on the actions of owners, operators, or users that engage in or facilitate infringement using the technologies, not on the underlying technologies themselves.

<sup>42</sup> Global Intellectual Property Center, Impacts of Digital Piracy on the U.S. Economy (June 2019), <https://www.theglobalipcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Digital-Video-Piracy.pdf><https://www.theglobalipcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Digital-Video-Piracy.pdf>.

offering popular copyright-protected content for free. Many sites also offer a tiered revenue sharing system to reward the uploaders of their most popular content, further incentivizing content contributors to continue uploading protected works, including pre-release material. Some cyberlocker sites do offer a takedown reporting system but typically do no proactive monitoring to stop the uploading, sharing and re-sharing of pirated and infringing content. Content reporting often requires right holders to monitor the thousands of streaming and sharing sites that link back to the cyberlocker, with no restrictions to stop content from being re-uploaded after its removal.

This NML also continues to highlight right holders concerns with “bulletproof” Internet service providers (ISPs) that facilitate piracy. Bulletproof ISPs are characterized by terms of service that often explicitly advertise leniency in allowing their customers to upload and distribute infringing content. Right holders have for several years expressed concerns with bulletproof ISPs, and in 2024, as with previous years, several submissions noted that the reliance of pirate sites on these ISPs made it increasingly difficult for right holders to remove infringing content. This is especially true where ISPs disguise their ownership and locations, and refuse to respond to right holders’ communications and takedown requests.

Additionally, the NML this year continues to highlight ongoing concern from right holders about the proliferation of counterfeit sales facilitated by the confluence of e-commerce platforms and social media. This trend is now well-established as the popularity of e-commerce has led many sellers to maintain both a physical and online presence, or to shift to online platforms entirely. Right holders state that while certain e-commerce and social commerce (social media sites with integrated e-commerce ecosystems) platforms have taken positive steps to implement anti-counterfeiting policies, many others still lack adequate anti-counterfeiting policies, processes, and tools such as identity verification, effective notice-and-takedown procedures, proactive anti-counterfeiting filters and tools, and strong policies against repeat infringers.

Right holders continued to express concern about fraudulent advertisements and links to fake websites misleading users into unknowingly purchasing counterfeit products through both

e-commerce and social commerce platforms. In 2024, as with in previous years, several submissions highlighted trends that spread through social commerce sites encouraging consumers to seek out counterfeit goods. Right holders noted the increasing popularity of social media influencers who review, promote, and share links to counterfeit luxury products, intentionally driving their viewers to purchase counterfeit goods through pages linked in their social media profiles. E-commerce and social commerce platforms can continue to address these types of concerns by adopting strong and effective IP enforcement policies, increasing transparency and collaboration with right holders to quickly address complaints, and working more closely with law enforcement to identify IP infringement.

However, this year many e-commerce and social commerce platforms took solid steps toward initiating additional anti-counterfeiting practices and adapting to new circumvention techniques used by counterfeiters. Several platforms filed public submissions outlining their implementation of new or enhanced anti-counterfeiting tools, including educational campaigns, increased identity verification requirements, and faster and more transparent notice-and-takedown processes. Additionally, several platforms continue to invest in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning technologies as a way to scale up and quickly adapt traditional anti-counterfeiting measures such as text and image screening. As e-commerce platforms and industry associations continue to become more transparent and forward-leaning with their anti-counterfeiting practices, an opportunity exists to collaboratively establish industry best practices, create standard counterfeit-related measurements, and find ways to counteract the ever-changing methods of those that manufacture, distribute, and sell counterfeit goods. Reducing the availability of counterfeit goods online should be viewed as an industry-wide goal.

### **1337X**

Nominated as 1337x.to. Related sites include 1337x.tw. Utilizes reverse proxy services to mask the location of its hosting servers.

The torrent website 1337x provides links to torrent files, which are small files that contain the information necessary to download unlicensed movies, television shows, music, videogames,

software, and other copyright-protected files through the BitTorrent protocol. It is reportedly one of the most visited pirate sites in Europe, and had over 39 million visitors in August 2024. Variants of the site have been subject to blocking orders in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

## **1FICHIER**

Nominated as 1fichier.com. Hosted in France.

This cyberlocker<sup>43</sup> is popular in France and reportedly makes premium pirated content, such as unlicensed movies and video games, available to the public. Despite a criminal conviction against the site's publisher and owner and related civil court judgments in French courts, currently in the appeals process, right holders state that the site has failed to come into compliance. The site was also found liable in French civil court for failing to remove or block access to infringing content. Right holders continue to raise concerns about 1fichier's low response rate to notice-and-takedown requests, and one right holder has reported a response rate of 16.64%. The low response rate reportedly not only attracts more unauthorized uploaders but also benefits third-party linking websites that index links to content hosted on 1fichier, since the infringing content typically remains active on the platform for long periods of time.

## **2EMBED**

Nominated as 2embed.cc. Utilizes reverse proxy services to mask the location of its hosting servers.

2embed is a pirate content management system that allegedly provides a large library of infringing content obtained by crawling many infringing websites and search engines and scraping infringing content. It offers its database to other illicit streaming websites and pirate IPTV apps, which can either use 2embed's services for free (in which case 2embed monetizes the infringing content by inserting advertisements into the streams) or by paying to insert their own ads. Despite successful enforcement action in July 2023 by right holders and anti-piracy trade

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<sup>43</sup>The cyberlockers identified in the NML reportedly operate primarily to provide users with access to unauthorized copyright-protected content.



associations to shut down 2embed.to, which was run from Vietnam, the site continues to operate using a number of different successor domains. The 2embed domain group reportedly received over 600 million monthly visitors in July 2024, according to SimilarWeb. 2embed is an example of a “piracy-as-a-service” provider that significantly contributes to the global trade in pirated content by offering services that make it easy for other bad actors to create, operate, and monetize fully functioning piracy operations.

## **AMARUTU**

Also known as Amarutu Technology Ltd or KoDDos.

Amarutu is a so-called “bulletproof” hosting provider that provides offshore hosting for criminal activity. Some of the biggest piracy sites use Amarutu services, and right holders state that Amarutu ignores the takedown requests that it receives. Right holders report that the number of unauthorized streams hosted by Amarutu has increased since the market was first reported on last year. The dedicated server page of Amarutu’s website advertises that “[Digital Millennium Copyright Act] messages will be forwarded to the client for resolution but in most cases action is not required.”

## **AVITO**

Nominated as avito.ru.

Avito is a Russia-based classified advertisements platform that reportedly allows sellers to advertise counterfeit products with little to no enforcement measures against them. Several right holders have reported difficulty in obtaining takedowns of the advertisements, with the site requiring detailed evidence of infringement to obtain removal, even reportedly in cases where the listing states that products are replicas. Additionally, right holders note a lack of proactive measures or other effective procedures to deal with repeat infringers, with many of the listings reappearing shortly after being taken down. Finally, right holders report a lack of collaboration on the part of Avito with right holders or trade associations in implementing effective policies to prevent advertisements of counterfeit products.

## **BAIDU WANGPAN**

Headquartered in China.

This cloud storage service is operated by Baidu, the largest search-engine provider in China. Users of this service are able to share links to files stored on their accounts with other users, and infringing content is reportedly disseminated widely through social media and other piracy linking sites. Baidu has been the subject of several copyright infringement cases in China brought by other content distributors, but right holders report little change in the site's enforcement measures. Although Baidu has several tools to take down unauthorized content, according to right holders, procedures for filing complaints are applied unevenly and lack transparency. Additionally, takedown times are reportedly lengthy, and right holders often have to repeatedly follow-up with Baidu to ensure that pirated content does not reappear on the platform. Right holders report little progress in Baidu's actions to suspend or terminate repeat infringers.

## **BUKALAPAK**

Nominated as bukalapak.com. Also available as a mobile app. Based in Indonesia.

Bukalapak was founded in 2010 and is one of the largest e-commerce markets in Indonesia. Bukalapak reported on its collaboration with brand owners on proactive takedown measures and collaboration with government authorities to refine proactive screening for pharmaceutical products. Some right holders expressed the hope that increased engagement from Bukalapak will lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness of anti-counterfeiting measures. Although right holders have welcomed reports of greater investments by Bukalapak in its anti-counterfeiting measures, they continue to report high volumes of counterfeit products, particularly counterfeit apparel and footwear, consumer electronics, and pharmaceutical products. Right holders noted the limited effectiveness of filtering and other proactive tools and that site penalties for selling counterfeit goods are insufficient to deter repeat offenders.

## **CUEVANA**

Nominated as [cuevana.biz](https://cuevana.biz). Related sites include [cuevana3.eu](https://cuevana3.eu), [cuevana3.ch](https://cuevana3.ch), [cuevana.pro](https://cuevana.pro), [cuevana.si](https://cuevana.si), [cuevana4.me](https://cuevana4.me), and [cuevana3cc.me](https://cuevana3cc.me). Utilizes reverse proxy services to mask the location of its hosting servers.

Cuevana is the most popular piracy site in Latin America and one of the most popular worldwide, with over 100 million visits in August 2024, according to SimilarWeb. Cuevana offers Spanish-language content, including more than 19,000 unlicensed television and movie titles. The site has been active since at least 2020 and relies on cyberlockers for the underlying content. The website monetizes its infringing content through advertising services. Cuevana's use of multiple domains has allowed variants of the site to remain operational. Despite successful enforcement efforts that enabled right holders to take control of 22 domain name variants in 2023, mirror sites were able to quickly re-emerge under new domains.

## **DDOS-GUARD**

Nominated as [ddos-guard.net](https://ddos-guard.net).

DDoS-Guard is an entity reportedly based out of Russia that offers various services including "bulletproof" hosting. According to right holders, it does not respond to takedown requests. DDos-Guard hosts a number of the most notorious cyberlockers and streaming and downloading sites offering pirated content in the world.

## **DHGATE**

Nominated as [dhgate.com](https://dhgate.com). Also available as a mobile app. Headquartered in China.

DHgate is one of the largest business-to-business cross-border e-commerce platforms in China, although it primarily serves purchasers outside of the country. This year, stakeholders have welcomed the introduction of a pilot IP enforcement program that includes a new portal for complaints, new procedures for screening of products and of prospective sellers, and enhanced penalties for repeat and high-volume infringers. Stakeholders have also expressed appreciation for DHgate's efforts to increase engagement and collaboration with right holders. In its submission for this year's List, DHgate described its significant investment in AI-based screening tools to detect and remove counterfeit goods, its vendor verification process that screens and

blacklists repeat infringers, its pilot program and other efforts to resolve right holder complaints, and its efforts to cooperate with law enforcement authorities, including publishing a law enforcement guide and assisting with several investigations involving health and safety matters. DHgate's reported successes also include proactively removing twice as many listings for infringing goods in 2023 as compared to 2022. However, some stakeholders continue to report that the platform contains a high volume of counterfeits and the repeat infringer policy is ineffective. They also note the platform appears to connect Chinese sellers and manufacturers specializing in counterfeits with wholesale buyers outside of China. Although some brand owners have successfully reduced counterfeits through collaboration with DHgate, others have reported mixed results. Sellers of counterfeit goods reportedly continue to evade detection by using code words and digitally blurred logos. DHgate has implemented policies to regulate influencers promoting products listed on its platform through posting on third-party websites, and right holders indicate that they need more time to determine the impact of these policies. Given that many stakeholders welcomed DHgate's recent initiatives but continue to raise concerns, DHgate should further work to improve its proactive detection procedures, seller vetting process, and screening for repeat infringers.

### **DOUYIN SHANGCHENG (DOUYIN MALL)**

Douyin Shangcheng (Douyin Mall) is a shopping platform under Douyin, the Chinese online platform offering short-form video, live stream, and e-commerce functionalities owned by ByteDance, also the parent company of Tiktok. Douyin has upgraded its e-commerce functions to include Douyin Mall as both a standalone application and an integrated feature accessible from the Douyin application. Douyin Mall allows users to scroll through suggested products or search for products and click through the Douyin Mall interface to view short videos or livestream videos about the products. From such videos or livestreams, users can use the shopping cart function to conduct purchases. Douyin contends that it has notice and takedown mechanisms, with multiple reporting portals for right holders to submit complaints, as well as a one-stop "IPPRO" platform for right holders to submit and manage IP infringement reports. Douyin also

described its efforts to screen proactively for specific terms, to train proactive identification models to target counterfeit products or sellers, and to cooperate with right holders and enforcement authorities, including on the pursuit of criminal cases offline. However, stakeholders have described a “rocketing” increase in the amount of counterfeit goods on the platform, an ineffective notice and takedown system, and reported lengthy delays in response to takedown requests, with little to no feedback on right holders’ complaints. Douyin should address concerns about the prevalence of counterfeits on its platform, including questions about the effectiveness of its proactive screening mechanisms and its system for managing IP infringement complaints.

### **FITGIRL-REPACKS**

Nominated as [fitgirl-repacks.site](http://fitgirl-repacks.site).

FitGirl-Repacks, often abbreviated to “fitgirl” is a well-known “repacking” site that provides access to compressed versions of unauthorized and pirated versions of video games. The site is popular because repacking allows users to download the pirated content using minimal bandwidth. The site reportedly fails to comply with takedown notices reporting infringing content and has been the subject of blocking orders in Italy and Spain.

### **FLOKINET**

“Bulletproof” hosting providers like FlokiNET support infringing websites by refusing to respond to notices of infringing activity and by failing to cooperate with right holders and law enforcement. FlokiNET’s website explicitly allows anonymous hosting of content, stating, “We do not require any personal details or identification, any valid e-mail address is enough information to be our client,” and the site is rarely responsive to law enforcement or right holder requests. FlokiNET reportedly has servers in Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Romania and hosts many websites associated with copyright infringing activity.

## **GENIPTV**

Nominated as genip.tv.

GenIPTV is one of the largest IPTV providers in the world, reportedly operating through multiple affiliates to sell subscriptions for access to over 10,000 broadcast and streaming channels as well as a video library of over 52,000 copyright-protected titles. According to its website, GenIPTV offers not only the “Latest Movies & Series” on multiple supported devices but also live sports and 24/7 online support.

## **HIANIME**

Nominated as hianime.to.

HiAnime is reportedly a successor site to the previously popular site Aniwatch, which was listed on the 2023 NML. The Aniwatch site was itself a rebrand of the well-known Zoro.to site. In July 2023, right holders and anti-piracy trade associations shut down zoro.to, which was run from Vietnam, and thereafter the site apparently was rebranded as aniwatch.to. The site was again rebranded to HiAnime in March 2024. Stakeholders report that the HiAnime site provides pirated versions of popular movies and television, particularly anime. According to SimilarWeb rankings, the site received over 200 million visits in August 2024.

## **INDIAMART**

IndiaMART, a high-volume e-commerce website and mobile app that connects buyers with suppliers, describes itself as the largest online business-to-business marketplace in India. While IndiaMART has been largely compliant with respect to takedown requests, there is no dedicated IP portal, the process of submitting such takedown requests is extremely cumbersome and the response time to stakeholders has been inconsistent. The large volume of counterfeit goods still available on IndiaMART, estimated to make up more than 50% of all products sold, including pharmaceuticals, electronics, and apparel, indicates that additional actions to implement anti-counterfeiting best practices are needed. Right holders remain concerned about the lack of proactive monitoring for infringing goods and an absence of clear certifications by

sellers, beyond acceptance of the terms of use, that they have a right to sell what they are selling either by license or by law. IndiaMART continues to disclaim all liability, claiming that it bears no responsibility for the products sold on its site.

## **KRAKENFILES**

Nominated as Krakenfiles.com.

This cyberlocker is a major source of infringing content, particularly pre-release music. Additionally, the site operator reportedly runs an associated forum site with links to Krakenfiles content where users can download pirated music tracks and albums. Traffic to the site has increased since it was first listed in the 2023 NML.

## **LIBGEN**

Nominated as libgen.rs. Related sites include libgen.is, libgen.li, libgen.st, library.lol, libgen.rocks, libgen.gs, annas-archive.org, annas-archive.gs, and other mirror sites. Reportedly operated from Russia.

Libgen, also known as the “Library Genesis Project,” hosts a large number of digital copies of books, manuals, journals, and other works, many of which are unauthorized copies of copyright protected content. According to Libgen, the site hosts 2.4 million non-fiction books, 80 million science magazine articles, 2.2 million fiction books, and 2 million comic strips. Libgen sites are subject to court orders in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In 2022, U.S. law enforcement seized hundreds of mirror site domains associated with Libgen. The site is also the subject of a 2023 lawsuit filed by major U.S. publishers alleging copyright infringement.

## **MAGISTV**

Nominated as magistv.net. Related sites include oficialmagistv.com, magistv.digital, magistv.la, magisla.com, magistvoficial.com, and magistv-venezuela.com.

MagisTV is one of the world’s most popular IPTV services and operates primarily in Latin America. The service provides unauthorized access to live sports streams, television channels, and on-demand movies and television shows to its customers for a monthly subscription. The

service's devices, subscriptions, and applications are distributed through a broad array of resellers and websites. MagisTV has reportedly filed for trademark registration for the company's wordmark in a number of Latin American countries, including Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, and Uruguay, as well as in the United States under a parent company based in Shenzhen, China. In September 2024, the Argentine government arrested several individuals for selling TV boxes to reproduce content illegally and blocked 70 associated streaming sites in an enforcement operation targeting pirating services, including MagisTV. There are also reportedly active criminal cases against MagisTV in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

## **NSW2U**

Nominated as nsw2u.com. Related sites include game-2u.com, ps4pkg.com, and BigNGame.com.

Nsw2u is a popular website to access links to download unauthorized copyrighted video game content, including pre-release content. The site generates income through advertising and links to other gaming platforms. The site utilizes multiple alternative domains to evade enforcement actions and does not respond to take down notices. Nsw2u is the subject of enforcement activity in France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

## **PINDUODUO**

Nominated as pinduoduo.com. Also available as a mobile app. Headquartered in China.

Pinduoduo, a social commerce app, is one of the largest e-commerce platforms in China. Right holders report that Pinduoduo continues to offer a high volume of counterfeit goods on their platform. As in previous years, stakeholders continue to highlight concerns about Pinduoduo's unwillingness to engage with brand owners to resolve issues or develop improved processes. Although the platform claims to have implemented anti-counterfeiting initiatives to assist with accurate product descriptions and combat misinformation from merchants, right holders convey that excessive delays in takedowns remain a problem and can take up to two weeks or more. Other longstanding issues remain unresolved, including onerous evidentiary requirements and lack of proactive measures to screen sellers and listings, as well as lack of



transparency with enforcement processes, such as penalty mechanisms and decisions rejecting takedown requests.

This year, right holders again noted Pinduoduo's ineffective seller vetting and raised concerns about the platform's reported practice of labeling sponsored listings as "authorized sellers," giving the appearance of legitimacy to counterfeit products and misleading consumers into believing that they are purchasing from the legitimate manufacturer or a licensed distributor. Right holders also continue to report difficulties in receiving information and support from Pinduoduo in pursuing follow-on investigations to uncover the manufacturing and distribution channels of the counterfeit goods.

## **RAPIDGATOR**

Nominated as [rapidgator.net](http://rapidgator.net). Related sites include [rg.to](http://rg.to). Reportedly operated from Russia.

Right holders report that Rapidgator, one of the largest file sharing websites in the world, hosts unlicensed high-quality, recent, and pre-release content. Other notorious markets use Rapidgator to host their pirated content. Rapidgator collects revenue through its premium membership and subscription plans and employs rewards and affiliate schemes to compensate users based on downloads and sales of new accounts. Rapidgator reportedly takes down some infringing content, but there are no proactive measures in place to prevent the upload of infringing content, and content is frequently reuploaded and disseminated. Right holders report that, according to the Google Transparency Report, Google has received delisting requests for more than 48 million Rapidgator URLs. Right holders report that traffic to the site has increased since last listed in the 2023 NML. This year, trade associations from the music, television, and book publishing industries all nominated Rapidgator for continued inclusion on the 2024 NML.

## **RUTRACKER**

Nominated as [rutracker.org](http://rutracker.org). Hosted in Russia.

Rutracker remains one of the most popular torrent sites in the world, even though it does not provide access to the public and requires users to register an account with a username and

password. In August 2024, Rutracker reportedly had 34.23 million visits from 6.12 million unique visitors. The site provides access to pirated movies, television shows, software, electronic games, and other copyright-protected works. It has been reportedly subject to blocking orders in Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Russia, and Singapore.

## **SAVEFROM**

Nominated as savefrom.net. Related sites include savef.net, savefrom.live, savefrom.app, save-from.net, savefrom.best, and save-from.biz.

SaveFrom is a popular stream-ripping site that circumvents the content protection measures on sites such as YouTube and provides content directly to users from those sites, allowing the user to save the video and audio to their devices. In April 2020, SaveFrom stated that, due to “attacks by certain US copyright holders,” it was terminating its services in the United States. It has also reportedly terminated services in the United Kingdom and Spain. However, it continues to operate in other countries and reportedly receives upwards of 100 million visits per month.

## **SCI-HUB**

Nominated as sci-hub.se. Related sites include sci-hub.ru, sci-hub.st, annas-archive.org, and annas-archive.gs. Reportedly hosted and operated from Russia.

Right holders continue to report that Sci-Hub and its mirror sites facilitate unauthorized access to over 88 million journal articles and academic papers, which comprise at least 90% of all toll-access published journal articles, a proportion greater than what is available legally to major institutional subscribers. Right holders state that Sci-Hub obtains these articles by using hijacked proxy credentials to allow remote users to illegally access various university intranet systems and university databases. The copyright-protected material obtained by Sci-Hub is reportedly stored on Sci-Hub servers as well as cross-posted to Libgen, another notorious market. Right holders state that the site appears to be funded through both donations as well as cryptocurrency. Sci-Hub is reportedly subject to blocking orders in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Sweden and is the subject of similar enforcement

activity in India that is currently unresolved. U.S. right holders secured several court judgments against Sci-Hub in 2015 and 2017, resulting in the suspension of its U.S.-administered domains.

## **SHOPEE**

Nominated as shopee.com. Also available as a mobile app. Headquartered in Singapore.

Shopee is an online and mobile e-commerce market based in Singapore with individual country-focused platforms serving Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, and Vietnam, as well as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico. The availability of counterfeit goods on Shopee's platforms appears to vary widely from country-to-country, with stakeholders identifying the Taiwan platform as being a positive example while highlighting serious concerns with the amount of counterfeit goods on Shopee's platforms in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and across Latin America.

In recent years, Shopee has developed an internal IP portal to give right holders the ability to manage their trademark and copyright enforcement requests across all of Shopee's individual country platforms, and Shopee maintains local listing teams that review and remove reported listings for each of its platforms. Shopee reported that the number of right holders registered with its IP portal has almost tripled in the past year. Shopee also reported that it recently introduced a pilot program to improve its IP infringement repeat offender policy, added a feature to allow users to report the sale of counterfeit goods at the shop level in addition to the product level, and increased the number of listings that can be reported at one time by a right holder. In 2024, Shopee continued to collaborate with brand owners on its blacklist keyword list and refine its data science model for detecting counterfeits. Shopee has also strengthened its Know Your Customer (KYC) Policy for some of its country platforms to better validate the identities of sellers against trusted databases. Some stakeholders noted Shopee's consistent engagement and candor about ongoing challenges, and they have expressed optimism about Shopee's efforts to partner with brands to resolve their concerns. One industry group highlighted its successful collaboration with Shopee to achieve a 100% removal rate for listings identified as selling counterfeit medicines through expedited actions.

Despite these positive responses to Shopee’s significant investment in its anti-counterfeiting programs, stakeholders continue to report high volumes of counterfeit goods across some of Shopee’s country platforms where Shopee has not implemented its latest IP enforcement systems, and where its teams operate with different levels of resources, responsiveness, and local challenges. A persistent complaint that applies to all of Shopee’s country platforms is that Shopee’s points-based repeat infringer policy allows sellers of reported counterfeit goods to continue operating their Shopee storefronts despite multiple reports. Stakeholders urge Shopee to adopt policies to institute clear rules for removing confirmed sellers of counterfeit goods, including those who engage in deceptive conduct such as the use of altered images to evade proactive detection methods or falsified documentation to support false claims of authenticity. Addressing these repeat infringers is an important step to reducing the burdens on right holders.

## **SQUITTER**

Nominated as squitter.eu.

Right holders report that Squitter Networks or ABC Consultancy, another “bulletproof hosting provider,” hosts a number of online piracy services, including several sites highlighted in this list. Squitter’s domain registration suggests it may be in the Netherlands, but physical addresses associated with Squitter point to various other countries. Despite stakeholder investigations, the true locations of the site and associated companies are unknown. The site appears to control Internet Protocol (IP) addresses assigned to several different countries and right holders report that the service operates under a variety of different names, making it more difficult to track and identify. Right holders state that Squitter has ignored thousands of takedown notices and does not respond to any communications. An associated domain reportedly advertised “[Digital Millennium Copyright Act] ignored” hosting as a service. Squitter appears to be a “stealth bulletproof” provider attempting to operate as anonymously as possible.

## **STREAMTAPE**

Nominated as streamtape.com. Reportedly hosted in France.

Streamtape is a popular video hosting service that offers unlimited storage and bandwidth. According to its website, Streamtape offers a partner program that allows content uploaders to earn money for every 10,000 downloads or streams of their content. As a result, Streamtape has become a popular platform for sharing infringing content. In August 2024 alone, Streamtape reportedly had 28.34 million visits from 10.66 million unique visitors.

## **TAOBAO**

Nominated as taobao.com. Headquartered in China.

Taobao, one of the largest e-commerce platforms in the world, is Alibaba's platform for Chinese consumers. Alibaba has proactively engaged with right holders and the U.S. Government to improve its anti-counterfeiting processes and tools across its platforms, including Taobao. Although Alibaba emphasizes its ongoing engagement with enforcement authorities to combat the sale of counterfeits, right holders continue to express concern that a recent structural reorganization by Alibaba has left the platform with fewer anti-counterfeiting resources to conduct investigations. Right holders recognized Alibaba's investment in anti-counterfeiting measures and industry engagement efforts in recent years, but they also continued to report high volumes of counterfeit products and pirated goods, such as PDF copies of books. Right holders highlighted the need for improvements to address the site's infringement reporting process and stringent criteria required for takedown notices, such as the requirement to identify specific piracy indicators within listings that infringers have kept deliberately vague. Furthermore, stakeholders convey that despite their ability to report obvious counterfeits that they identify on the platform for fast processing, high-quality counterfeits that are sold at prices similar to their authentic counterparts are not easily identified. Alibaba contends that its automated reporting platform is user friendly and only requires right holders to upload registration certificates to prove their rights or document their unregistered copyrights by filling out a specific form. USTR will continue to monitor the transparency and effectiveness

of Taobao's anti-counterfeiting efforts, including the evidentiary requirements for takedown requests.

### **THEPIRATEBAY**

Nominated as thepiratebay.org. Utilizes reverse proxy services to mask the location of its hosting servers.

As one of the first BitTorrent indexing websites and one of the most vocal in openly promoting piracy, ThePirateBay reportedly remains one of the most frequently visited BitTorrent websites in the world. ThePirateBay is available in 35 languages and serves a global market, and has used multiple alternative domains hosted globally. Authorities in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom have issued orders blocking access to this site. Right holders report that this site does not respond to takedown requests.

### **TORRENT GALAXY**

Nominated as torrentgalaxy.to. Related sites include torrentglaxy.mx, torrentgalaxy.buzz, tgx.rs, and tgx.sb.

Torrent Galaxy is a popular BitTorrent streaming site that grew after another popular site, ExtraTorrent, shut down in 2018. In addition to torrent downloads, Torrent Galaxy also offers streaming for some content. After the shutdown of RARBG, one of the world's largest torrent sites, in May 2023, many users reportedly moved from RARBG to Torrent Galaxy. RARBG was well-known for having copies of new movies and television programs sourced from illegal "release groups," and Torrent Galaxy has sought to provide access to similar content. Torrent Galaxy has reportedly received over 320 million visits since August 2023.

### **UNKNOWNCHEATS**

Nominated as unknowncheats.me.

This site is an example of a popular cheat site that allows users to submit, develop, and download video game cheat codes for players. These codes can infringe on right holders' copyrights when the cheat code copies the underlying code of the game software. The

unknowncheats site reportedly offers cheat code software for over 100 different copyrighted titles and relies on advertising to generate revenue.

## **VEGAMOVIES**

Nominated as vegamovies.in. Related sites include vegamovies.booo and vegamovies.ren.

Vegamovies is one of the most popular piracy streaming sites in India. The site is in English and is known for providing unauthorized access to a wide range of international movie and television content, as well as India-based content. Right holders report that the site frequently changes its domain name to evade enforcement efforts, and has multiple sources of revenue including advertising. The site's use of numerous and different domain names means that total site traffic is dispersed, but right holders report that Vegamovies receives more than 140 million visits per month.

## **VIRTUAL SYSTEMS, LLC**

Nominated as vsys.host. Reportedly based in Ukraine.

Right holders report that Virtual Systems is another popular bulletproof hosting provider that provides services to upwards of five thousand infringing websites and IPTV services, including many sites highlighted in this NML. The Virtual Systems website reportedly advertises "DCMA Ignored" hosting services and right holders state that the site continues to ignore thousands of takedown notices and does not respond to any communications.

## **VK**

Nominated as vk.com. Headquartered in Russia.

Nominated once again this year, VKontakte (VK) is one of the most popular sites in the world and among the top sites visited in Russia. It continues to operate as an extremely popular social networking site but also reportedly facilitates the distribution of copyright-infringing files, with thousands of infringing films and television programs identified by the U.S. motion picture industry each month. The site allows users to easily upload video files, including pirated content, and to stream this content through an embedded video player. Despite previous actions to

improve copyright protection, right holders report that VK's responsiveness to takedown notice has been inconsistent since 2022 and the site is overall less willing to cooperate with industry. Moreover, right holders continue to note that VK lacks an effective repeat-infringer policy and other processes to effectively reduce the volume of infringing content posted by its users. Additionally, while VK blocks known copyright infringing sites from accessing its videos, it remains easy for third-party sites to stream illegal content from video.mail.ru, which is operated by VK's parent company, Mail.ru Group. Looking to other jurisdictions, VK.com has been blocked in Italy.

### **WHMCS SMARTERS**

Sites include whmcsmarters.com and iptvsmarters.com. Also doing business as New Spark Technology, Mohali, India.

WHMCS Smarters is a company in India that sets customers up in the illegal IPTV business by building for them a customized "over the top" (OTT) IPTV platform from scratch and providing end-to-end support. According to the WHMCS Smarters website, services include website design and development, customized apps on several different platforms, design, graphics, branding, payment processing, and billing. WHMCS Smarters also provides the IPTV Smarters Pro App, a video player configured for different types of platforms that allows users to watch live television, movies and TV series on demand, and TV catch-up on their devices. While WHMCS Smarters states that they do not sell infringing streams, channels, or other content or subscriptions, it does sell the software, tools, and services an individual would need to establish and operate his or her own "off the shelf" illegal IPTV business.

### **Y2MATE**

Nominated as y2mate.com. Related site includes yt1s.com.

Y2mate is reportedly a highly popular YouTube stream-ripping site. Despite site-blocking orders around the world, the site still reportedly received over 800 million visits in the last 12 months. Previously, the site had voluntarily limited access from France, Germany, the United



Kingdom, and the United States. However, these restrictions have reportedly been lifted and the site is now available in these countries. Among other things, stream ripping sites enable users to easily download music videos and tracks from YouTube and similar sites. Stream ripping is a popular method for obtaining unauthorized copyright-protected music.

## **YTS.MX**

Nominated as yts.mx. Reportedly hosted in Bulgaria.

YTS, also known as YIFY, is reportedly the most popular peer-to-peer torrent site dedicated to movies in the world, with over 62,000 high-quality films available including high definition, 4K, and even 3D. The site facilitates global consumption of its library of pirated content through an accompanying subtitle site, yifysubtitles.org, which provides subtitles in numerous different languages synchronized to each individual torrent. The site is reportedly subject to blocking orders in Australia, Denmark, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Ireland, Malaysia, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom, but frequently changes domain names to avoid enforcement.

## Physical Markets

While the sale and distribution of counterfeit and pirated goods online continue to be a growing concern, physical markets continue to enable substantial trade in counterfeit and pirated goods.

In a global environment, basic enforcement measures against unscrupulous retailers and wholesalers will not be sufficient to reduce the flow of counterfeit and pirated products. To address current and ongoing challenges, governments need targeted, modernized enforcement tools, including:

- effective border enforcement measures to prevent the exportation of counterfeit and pirated goods manufactured in their countries, the importation of such goods into their countries, and the transiting or transshipment of such goods through their countries on the way to destination countries;
- the ability for customs and criminal authorities to detain, seize, and destroy counterfeit and pirated goods entering into and exiting from free trade zones;
- robust data sharing and border enforcement authority to interdict small consignment shipments, such as those sent through postal or express-courier services;
- asset forfeiture, which is a tool that can be used to reach owners of the markets or facilities where infringing products are manufactured, assembled, processed, sold, and stored;
- criminal procedures and penalties for trafficking in counterfeit labels and packaging; and
- enhanced criminal penalties for particularly serious cases, such as large-scale commercial trafficking in counterfeit products, and trafficking in counterfeit products that threaten security, health, and safety.

This year, stakeholders continue to report that many physical markets also offer online sales, a trend that grew out of the COVID-19 pandemic and that market vendors continue to maintain and profit from today. Some sellers have permanently shifted to focus more on online

trafficking, using their physical space to store goods that are subsequently sent or delivered to online purchasers, while others have adopted a hybrid approach, conducting both in-person and online sales. USTR will continue to monitor and evaluate the infringing activities in these markets.

## **ARGENTINA**

### *Barrio Once, Buenos Aires*

Barrio Once is a large neighborhood with a high concentration of indoor and outdoor street vendors of counterfeit products. Right holders report that vendors offer large quantities of easily visible counterfeit apparel, cosmetics, handbags, wallets, accessories, and shoes. An August 2024 report on illegal sales from the Argentine Chamber of Trade and Services (CAC) reported that Barrio Once represents 27.7% of total illegal street vendors in the City of Buenos Aires. In October 2024, the City of Buenos Aires seized \$1.02 million in goods from 23 vendors in this market following a five-month investigation, and national police conducted six additional raids throughout the year for counterfeit merchandise. These enforcement actions have decreased the number of illegal vendors in Barrio Once, but also prompted their relocation to other illegal markets.

### *La Salada, Buenos Aires*

La Salada is an area covering about 50 acres that incorporates three markets primarily for low-cost clothing and apparel. La Salada reportedly hosts 8,000 vendors and supports the sale and international distribution of counterfeit goods manufactured in the outskirts of the City of Buenos Aires. The market has been operating for over 30 years, and now also advertises on social media and hosts its own website. In 2024, the national police conducted 31 raids for counterfeit merchandise and also targeted the supply and transport of counterfeit goods from other locations to the market, but this increase in enforcement has not significantly reduced the size of the market. Argentina's currency depreciation has increased the attractiveness of the

market for shoppers not only from Argentina but from neighboring countries. In 2024, La Salada continued to attract shopping tours from neighboring countries such as Brazil and Uruguay.

## **BRAZIL**

### *Rua 25 de Março, São Paulo*

The Rua 25 de Março area includes seven markets spanning São Paulo's Centro Histórico, Santa Ifigênia, and Bras neighborhoods, including Shopping 25 de Março, Galeria Page Centro, Santa Ifigênia, Shopping Tupan, Shopping Korai, Feira da Madrugada, and Nova Feira da Madrugada. The Rua 25 de Março markets remain notorious for selling counterfeit and pirated goods as well as for containing warehouses that store these goods. Right holders note that this area is one of the largest wholesale and retail counterfeit markets in Brazil and Latin America, with over a thousand shops selling counterfeit goods of all kinds, including consumer electronics, clothing, footwear, eyewear, perfume, fashion accessories, luxury goods, toys, circumvention devices, and consoles pre-loaded with thousands of video game copies. Right holders also state that the Rua 25 de Março markets contain facilities to distribute counterfeit and pirated goods throughout São Paulo and other parts of Brazil. Despite some enforcement actions, those responsible for the trade in illegal goods through this market have not been held accountable.

## **CAMBODIA**

### *Central Market, Phnom Penh*

Central Market, a sprawling market and historic landmark in Phnom Penh, is known for the sale of counterfeit goods, including apparel, shoes, handbags, watches, sunglasses, and other items. Many of the goods appear to be imported from China, Thailand, or Vietnam. According to vendors, local authorities have conducted an increasing number of raids to seize counterfeit products or levy penalty fees. However, the Central Market remains a popular destination, and Cambodia continues to be a growing hub for the distribution of counterfeit goods.

## **CANADA**

### *Pacific Mall, Toronto*

Right holders continue to report the widespread availability of counterfeit goods for sale at Pacific Mall, with Pacific Mall management not taking the necessary measures against sellers and law enforcement not prioritizing actions against counterfeit trade. Noticeably counterfeit luxury goods, apparel, electronics, and automobile parts are reportedly on display or hidden under tables or in back rooms but are available upon request. Some higher-end counterfeit products are being sold as authentic, with packaging and tags resembling the authentic brands but at a reduced price.

## **CHINA**

China continues to be the number one source of counterfeit products in the world. Counterfeit and pirated goods from China, together with transshipped goods from China to Hong Kong, China, accounted for 84% of the value (measured by manufacturer's suggested retail price) and 90% of the total quantity of counterfeit and pirated goods seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in 2023.<sup>44</sup> With the end of COVID-19 restrictions, physical markets continue to experience increased foot traffic and the return of counterfeit sales. On the other hand, a recent economic downturn in China caused some markets to lose customers. Sellers of counterfeit merchandise continue to use their brick-and-mortar storefronts as points of contact for customers, sites for "sample/product testing," and centers for fulfillment of online sales. Enforcement authorities targeting counterfeit goods online often uncover links to vendors with a presence in physical markets. However, in many cases, enforcement at physical markets remains weak and easily circumvented by vendors. USTR encourages China to modify and expand the scope of robust enforcement actions to respond to the changing nature of counterfeit sales at physical markets, with a special focus on the following key markets.

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<sup>44</sup> CBP, Intellectual Property Rights Fiscal Year 2023 Seizure Statistics, <https://www.cbp.gov/trade/priority-issues/ipr/statistics>

*Baiyun Leather Trading Center, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province*

Right holders reported that storefronts at this location sell many types of counterfeit goods, including leather bags, garments, wallets, and other accessories. While storefronts generally did not openly display counterfeit goods, when asked, storekeepers showed pictures of counterfeit products kept in closed cabinets, small suitcases underneath their desks, or on the upper floors of the market. Sellers even indicated that they could ship counterfeit items to the United States. The storefronts containing counterfeits are found from the fourth to sixth floor of this location.

*Huaqiangbei Electronics Malls, including the Yuan Wang Digital Mall, Long Sheng Communications Market, Tongtiandi Communication Market Feiyang Yang Times, SEG Communication Market, and Taixing Communications Market, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province*

Right holders describe this market as offering widespread and high-volume retail and bulk sales of counterfeit electronics. The location continues to supply electronic devices and components from manufacturers in Shenzhen and surrounding cities to the world. At one of the malls, Yuan Wan Digital Mall, nearly all storefronts sold counterfeit products, with vendors offering “high quality copies” to a steady stream of customer foot traffic. Right holders continue to report that many counterfeit sellers continue to shift their sales online and use the stores as contact points for product development, logistics, warehousing, and distribution of counterfeit goods. At another location in the area, SEG Communication Market, while a large sign warns against intellectual property rights violations and outlines potential punishments, there has been no visible enforcement by authorities as shopkeepers openly offered counterfeit goods to passersby.

*Kindo Garment Market, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province*

Approximately 85% of storefronts in the upper five floors of this eight-floor market sell counterfeit luxury apparel products. These storefronts also advertise to foreign visitors that they

can ship counterfeit goods abroad. While authorities do inspect the market every day, they typically do so at the same exact time. This reportedly predictable pattern leads to owners essentially hiding their counterfeits during these inspections, and then bringing them back out again once the authorities leave.

#### *Luohu Commercial City, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province*

This is a well-known mall located next to the Luohu border crossing between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, China, where all storefronts remain open despite an economic downturn. Right holders report that counterfeit products, in particular watches, continue to be available at this market. In addition, while large banners in the market encourage respect for intellectual property rights, there appears to be no visible enforcement, as many sellers openly sell so-called “high quality” counterfeits to customers.

#### *Tanggu Yanghuo Market, Tianjin*

This market consists of approximately 80 stalls along a 100-yard hallway and under a large closed roof. Storefronts at this market openly sell counterfeit goods, including watches, handbags, apparel, and shoes, with logos and other advertising immediately visible to any arriving visitor. Storefronts easily evade detection by simply closing their store doors when they see suspicious personnel coming down the hallway, only to reopen them when they leave.

#### *Wu'ai Market, Shenyang, Liaoning Province*

This large wholesale and retail market in Northeastern China, which has a state-owned management company, remains a regional hub for the distribution of counterfeit shoes, jewelry, handbags, luggage, and apparel. Vendors continue to openly advertise counterfeit products for retail and wholesale purchase, including footwear, handbags, backpacks, luggage, toys, jewelry, and apparel. Right holders report that, although inspections and raids have been conducted from time to time, the impact has been minimal. Additionally, local authorities are reportedly

concerned about how actions against infringing vendors could harm employment in the region, which has discouraged them from addressing counterfeiting.

#### *Zhanxi Market / Watch Market, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province*

This group of large, mall-sized markets near Zhanxi Road in Guangzhou are located within a mile of each other and offer mainly counterfeit apparel, shoes, watches, and purses. Shopkeepers claim to use genuine surplus material or operate from the same factories that manufacture well-known brand-name products. Right holders continue to report some cooperation from the operators of the markets and law enforcement to curb the sale of counterfeits, such as frequent inspections and shop closures. These actions remain largely ineffective as shopkeepers simply close their stores or hide counterfeits when inspectors arrive. In other instances, authorities reportedly take pictures of storefronts, but do not talk to any vendors or search stalls for counterfeit goods.

## **COLOMBIA**

#### *San Andresitos Market, Bogotá*

The “San Andresitos” markets are a collection of over 600 shopping centers across Colombia selling counterfeit goods, such as clothing, shoes, handbags, perfumes, and cell phone accessories. While San Andresitos markets exist in most large Colombian cities, the majority are located in Bogotá. The largest San Andresitos in Bogotá are “San Andresito de la 38” and “San Andresito de San José.” Right holders estimate that 80% of the foreign-branded products sold at San Andresitos are counterfeit. Although Colombia’s Tax and Customs Police have seized counterfeit goods at market stalls, most of the inventory is located in off-site warehouses. As a result, enforcement efforts are also focused on warehouses where counterfeit goods are stockpiled and distributed to San Andresitos markets across the country. Despite police efforts, San Andresitos markets continue to draw large numbers of customers, with the local media reporting that the markets generate over one million jobs nationwide. The individual shopping



centers also maintain professionally branded websites and social media accounts to advertise merchandise found in physical stores.

## **INDIA**

### *Heera Panna, Mumbai*

A major indoor market located in the heart of Mumbai with a large number of manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers, Heera Panna reportedly offers counterfeit watches, footwear, accessories, and cosmetics. Right holders warn that counterfeit cosmetics sold at this market may have health and safety risks.

### *Sadar Patrappa Road Market, Bengaluru*

Sadar Patrappa (SP) Road Market is well-known for a wide variety of counterfeit electronic products, sold at a fraction of the cost of legitimate products and attracting large numbers of customers. Despite occasional raids on counterfeits in this market, enforcement efforts by local authorities have been insufficient to significantly reduce sales of counterfeit products in this Bengaluru market.

### *Tank Road, Delhi*

Right holders report that this central New Delhi market continues to sell a significant number of counterfeit products, including apparel, footwear, watches, and beauty products. Tank Road Market—as well as other nearby markets in the Karol Bagh neighborhood including the Karol Bagh Market and Gaffar Market—supply wholesale counterfeit goods to be resold through the region, and small-scale manufacturing occurs in the area as well. Right holders note concern that counterfeits sold at the markets in the Karol Bagh neighborhood pose a risk to public health and safety. They also report that support from local police has been inconsistent and enforcement efforts have been insufficient to significantly reduce sales of counterfeits in the market.

## **INDONESIA**

### *Mangga Dua Market, Jakarta*

Mangga Dua remains a popular market for a variety of counterfeit goods, including handbags, wallets, toys, leather goods, and apparel. There has been little or no enforcement actions against counterfeit sellers. Stakeholders continue to report that warning letters issued to sellers have been largely ineffective and they raise concerns about the lack of criminal prosecutions. Indonesia should take robust and expanded enforcement actions in this and other markets, including through actions by the IP Enforcement Task Force.

## **KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

### *Dordoi/Dordoy Market, Bishkek*

Known locally as “Container City,” this market stretches for more than a kilometer on the northeastern outskirts of Bishkek and is one of the largest markets in Central Asia. Large volumes of various types of counterfeit goods, including footwear, clothing and luxury items, are reportedly easy to find. This market reportedly also supplies other markets including Jayma Bazaar in Osh, which further supplies markets and consumers in the region. Dordoi Market has traditionally been the center of the Kyrgyz Republic’s re-export activity, and thus a transit hub for China-made goods, including counterfeits, en route to Europe and Russia. Laws prohibiting counterfeit goods are rarely enforced in the market and efforts by the Kyrgyz government to mandate electronic cash registers to track sales have failed.

## **MALAYSIA**

### *Petaling Street Market, Kuala Lumpur*

Petaling Street Market is a well-known market that is popular with tourists and sells counterfeit goods, including apparel, shoes, and accessories. The Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living and the Royal Malaysia Police have conducted several raids. However, counterfeits continue to be openly displayed and sold at high volumes

## **MEXICO**

### *El Santuario, Guadalajara*

El Santuario is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Guadalajara and is a well-known location for the sale and distribution of illicit drugs, including counterfeit, stolen, and expired medicine. Vendors in this neighborhood are engaged in retail-level sales, wholesaling, warehousing, and distribution of counterfeit pharmaceuticals throughout the region, which stakeholders report have resulted in a billion dollars in annual losses to legitimate companies. The illegal activity in this neighborhood is conducted in the open with no apparent enforcement actions by authorities to seize the counterfeit pharmaceuticals or bring criminal actions against those responsible for the illicit activity.

### *Mercado San Juan de Dios, Guadalajara*

Mercado San Juan de Dios, also known as Mercado Libertad and located in Guadalajara, is the largest indoor market in Latin America, spanning over 430,000 square feet and hosting approximately 3,000 stalls. Right holders report that the majority of vendors in this market sell counterfeit apparel, footwear, home goods, pharmaceuticals, and accessories, as well as pirated software, movies, electronic games, and electronic-game circumvention devices. Despite the reported scale of counterfeiting, no major IP enforcement raids were conducted in 2024. Right holders report that the government of Guadalajara is the owner of the market and that the illegal activity is conducted openly, in full view of the authorities.

### *Tepito, Mexico City*

Tepito, a massive open-air market in the middle of Mexico City, is a major distribution hub for counterfeit and pirated goods in local markets across Mexico and Central America. Right holders report that Tepito remains dangerous due to criminal activity, making it nearly impossible for right holders to enforce their rights themselves. Infringing items sold at Tepito include counterfeit apparel, accessories, beauty products, luxury goods, and electronics, as well as video games, modified game consoles, and circumvention devices designed to enable video

game piracy. However, unlike previous years, in 2024 Mexican authorities apparently conducted no raids against counterfeit and pirated products at the market.

## **PARAGUAY**

### *Ciudad del Este*

Ciudad del Este has been named in the NML or the Special 301 Report for over 20 years. The porous border crossings at Ciudad del Este and the city itself have long been known as a regional hub for the manufacture, assembly, and distribution of counterfeit and pirated products in the Brazil-Argentina-Paraguay tri-border area and beyond, including apparel, footwear, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and automotive equipment. Right holders have identified concerns with the lack of effective enforcement against counterfeit goods by customs officials, police, prosecutors, and judicial officials, as well as the lack of coordination between these authorities. Although officials at the National Directorate of Intellectual Property (DINAPI) have reported a considerable improvement in enforcement actions that they have coordinated since 2023, the scope of the counterfeit distribution and manufacturing operations in Ciudad del Este requires a whole-of-government approach and a concerted effort to address the wider circle of corruption that enables the illicit activities in this market.

## **PERU**

### *Gamarra Emporium, Lima*

Gamarra Emporium is Peru's primary textile market and garment district which includes more than twenty blocks of large, multistory complexes with thousands of shops where vendors sell fabric in bulk, curtains, bed linens, and all categories of clothing, the vast majority being off-brand as well as counterfeit apparel. In addition to the indoor stores, dozens of makeshift vendors fill the streets with racks and tables full of clothing bearing a variety of recognizable brands, sports teams, and cartoon characters. Reviews on travel websites note its wide selection of counterfeit products. In 2024, Peru's National Police conducted 36 police operations on Gamarra Emporium, reportedly seizing counterfeit items with a total street value of \$15.7 million

and resulting in 96 arrests. However, these enforcement actions have not resulted in a noticeable decrease in the number of illicit products available in the market.

#### *Polvos Azules, Lima*

Polvos Azules is an indoor shopping center located in the La Victoria district of Lima with a capacity of approximately 2,000 stalls selling a wide range of counterfeit apparel, fashion accessories, footwear, perfumes, handbags and luggage, videogames and consoles, cell phones, and other electronics. Polvos Azules has various social media accounts for advertising purposes. The social media pages also include photos and contact information for customers interested in purchasing items from individual vendors. A National Police of Peru (PNP) operation at the shopping center in January 2024 resulted in five arrests and confiscation of shirts, pants, shorts, and jackets with a value of over \$500,000. While Peruvian authorities have launched occasional enforcement actions at Polvos Azules, these seem to have had little impact and failed to deter large-scale trafficking of infringing products there.

## **PHILIPPINES**

#### *Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan, Metro Manila*

Greenhills Shopping Center is a large mall in Manila with many storefronts selling electronics, perfumes, watches, shoes, accessories, and fashion items. Law enforcement authorities, in collaboration with right holders, have conducted raids at the mall, and the management at Greenhills Shopping Center has applied a three-strikes rule to take action against counterfeit sellers. The government, through the National Committee on Intellectual Property Rights, has worked with right holders and shopping center management on implementing a transition program to transform Greenhills Shopping Center into a high-end mall with legitimate sellers. This program includes efforts at rezoning the mall and shifting sellers to local products through incentives and premium locations in the mall. Right holders have welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with government authorities and Greenhills Shopping Center management to remove counterfeit sellers. However, Greenhills Shopping Center

remains popular on social media as a destination for purchasing counterfeit goods, and right holders report high volumes of counterfeit goods in secret storerooms. Right holders continue to wait and see if the transition program will result in addressing the volume of counterfeit goods.

## **RUSSIA**

### *Dubrovka Market, Moscow*

This market in the southeast of Moscow hosts an estimated 700 vendors spread out over 20 acres, and its location next to a large transport interchange provides easy access for buyers from Moscow and surrounding areas. The vast majority of the goods sold at this market appear to be counterfeit footwear, apparel, and luxury watches and range from high-quality copies to low-quality knockoffs. There is no apparent enforcement presence at this market.

### *Gorbushkin Dvor Trade Center, Moscow*

Gorbushkin Dvor Trade Center is reportedly known primarily for its high volume of counterfeit electronics and high-end home appliances, such as refrigerators, washing machines, and flat screen televisions. Counterfeit luxury watches and pirated movies, videogame systems, and software are also available at a fraction of normal retail prices. There are reportedly more than 1,000 vendors in this market with no visible police presence. Right holders continue to report decreased enforcement activity. The Moscow City government had previously announced plans to close the Gorbushkin Dvor market and build an apartment building by 2025, but there is reportedly no decrease in market activity and no signs that this plan is moving forward.

### *Sadovod Market, Moscow*

Sadovod Market is the largest trading center for consumer goods in Russia, spanning nearly 100 acres with over 9,500 stores serving more than 90 million customers per year. Businesses from across Russia and Central Asia, as well as China and Vietnam trade in counterfeit clothing, accessories, and cosmetics of well-known name brands. In particular, counterfeit cosmetics and perfume are reportedly popular items due to high quality packaging that is nearly

indistinguishable from the legitimate product and social media advertising by well-known influencers. The market also advertises the availability of bulk purchases of beauty products across social media. Right holders note that there is no visible police presence in the market and vendors openly display counterfeit products.

## **THAILAND**

### *MBK Center, Bangkok*

MBK Center in Bangkok is a large eight-floor shopping mall with about 2,000 stores catering to tourists and others. As a result of an action plan between the Department of Intellectual Property and the Economic Crime Suppression Division of the Royal Thai Police, there have been significant efforts in increasing the frequency of enforcement actions at MBK Center, with almost a dozen search warrants executed in August 2024 that resulted in the seizure of more than 20,000 counterfeit goods. These enforcement actions have been accompanied by high-profile public education campaigns that raise awareness of the negative impacts of counterfeits among consumers and retailers. The IP Enforcement Center at MBK Center continues to conduct random patrols to deter counterfeit activities, and consumers can take suspected counterfeit goods there for inspection. However, stakeholders continue to report high volumes of counterfeits at MBK, including counterfeits of luxury handbags, clothing, watches, and shoes. Although large portions of MBK are focused on legitimate goods, sections of the mall contain sellers that prominently display counterfeits. There have been reports of lease terminations for tenants who have been arrested on charges of IP violations, but it is unclear how many terminations or arrests have occurred. It is important for MBK's owners and operators to demonstrate that enforcement actions and lease terminations at MBK have deterrent effects on other sellers in order to address the high volume of counterfeits.

## **TÜRKIYE**

### *Tahtakale, Istanbul*

Türkiye's geographic location makes it a major transit hub for counterfeit goods coming from China into European and Middle Eastern markets. The Tahtakale district of Istanbul adjoins the walled Grand Bazaar, but is commercially separate. The shops in the Tahtakale district deal in a wide variety of inexpensive goods, many of which are counterfeit clothing and shoes. Right holders report that local law enforcement has increased raid activity in recent years and that counterfeits are "somewhat less visible." Despite this, counterfeit products remain widely available in the market and right holders continue to encourage sustained enforcement actions.

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### *Markets in Deira District, Dubai*

The Deira District is home to several markets, including the Dubai Souk, Deira Old Souk, Dubai Gold Souk, Dubai Spice Souk, and Perfume Souk. Right holders report these markets are well-known among tourists and locals for selling IP-infringing goods ranging from luxury items to industrial products. Despite official enforcement efforts, the Deira District remains a major center for counterfeit trade in the region. Right holders report that, despite frequent raids and large-scale seizures by authorities, counterfeit products remain widely available. Right holders continue to report the need for deterrent-level penalties to discourage repeat violators.

## **VIETNAM**

### *Saigon Square Shopping Mall, Ho Chi Minh City*

Saigon Square Shopping Mall, located just across the street from one of the largest shopping malls in Ho Chi Minh City, remains a popular market for the sale of counterfeit luxury products, including handbags, wallets, jewelry, and watches. As some counterfeit sales in Vietnam have shifted online, the market now mainly attracts tourists and domestic travelers. Although right holders acknowledge regular administrative enforcement efforts by government



authorities, they note that low penalties have had little deterrent effect, and counterfeit products remain rampant.

## Public Information

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The 2024 Notorious Markets List is the result of the fifteenth out-of-cycle review of notorious markets, which USTR initiated on August 16, 2024, through a Federal Register Request for Public Comments. The 60 public submissions this year are available at <https://www.regulations.gov>, Docket Number USTR-2024-0013. USTR developed the 2024 NML in coordination with the federal agencies represented on the Special 301 Subcommittee of the Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC). Information about Special 301 and other intellectual property-related processes and issues is available at <https://ustr.gov/issue-areas/intellectualproperty>.

To assist U.S. right holders and consumers who confront IP infringement online, the U.S. Government continues to expand the tools available on <https://www.stopfakes.gov>, including by providing links to infringement reporting mechanisms at a number of popular online retailers and markets. Victims and interested parties may report IP theft and import violations to U.S. law enforcement agencies through <https://www.stopfakes.gov>, <https://eallegations.cbp.gov>, or <https://www.iprcenter.gov/referral/report-ip-theft-form>.