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PRESS RELEASE

GRA is disappointed in the biased reporting of the alleged disappearance of the smuggler's vessel

The Guyana Revenue Authority is immensely dissatisfied with the manner in which the alleged disappearance of the smuggler's boat was reported in the Kaieteur News on June 19, 2010. The GRA in taking note of the article is disappointed in the one sided report which failed to commend the dedicated officers for the seizure of the vessel and the prosecution of those involved in the illegal activities. Moreover, the citing of information provided by an unnamed source (third party) and failure to verify the veracity of the information leave much to be desired and contributes to the jeopardizing of the investigation.

Further, the Commissioner-General is challenging all media houses to work with the GRA to avoid compromising ongoing investigations. He says, "in seeking to curb illegal activities the lives of dedicated officers are jeopardized when information provided by third parties are not treated responsibly. In the execution of their duties, the Law Enforcement Officers at the GRA are daily confronted with dangerous criminals yet they persist in the diligent performance of their responsibilities." It is the view of the Commissioner-General that the least that can be done for the courageous officers is the show of appreciation for their dedication and efficiency. To this end, media practitioners are urged to exercise patriotism in their reporting by focusing on the positives.

The employees of the Law Enforcement and Investigation Division (LEID) on May 28, 2010 promptly responded to information, provided by an informant, and successfully located the wooden vessel which was at the time transporting a quantity of uncustomed goods at No. 7 Beach area, West Coast Berbice. At the time of the seizure the boat was in the possession of Eric Mootoo, Boodram and Mangar Outar, all of the West Coast of

Berbice, who have since been prosecuted in relation to breaches of section 218 (d) of the Customs Act Chapter 82:01.

Meanwhile, the Law Enforcement and Investigation Division of the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) and the Guyana Police Force continue to work in close collaboration in investigating the alleged disappearance of the smuggler's boat from the Customs Boathouse Wharf on June 16, 2010.