



PRESS STATEMENT | 20TH MARCH 2025

*For Immediate Release*

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## **SERI Commends Successful Efforts in Reducing Illicit Cigarettes Through Enhanced Enforcement**

Kuala Lumpur, March 24, 2025 - Social and Economic Research Initiative (SERI) congratulates the Malaysian government's efforts to curb the trade of illicit cigarettes through improved enforcement measures. As a result, recent trends have shown a decline in the incidence of illicit cigarettes.

SERI recognises the government's proactive approach to strengthening enforcement, such as the establishment of the Malaysian Border Control and Protection Agency (AKPS) to consolidate more than 20 agencies handling border security, which will potentially lead to further reductions in illicit cigarettes.

As Malaysia moves forward with implementing the Control of Smoking Products For Public Health Act 2024, this momentum in tobacco control must continue to ensure a sustained reduction in smoking prevalence through broader measures, such as increasing tobacco taxation.

With the last tax hike occurring in 2015, Malaysia is long overdue for an increase in tobacco taxation. SERI is currently conducting research on tobacco taxation as part of its commitment to evidence-based policymaking. Increasing tobacco taxes has been widely recognised as an effective tool in reducing smoking rates, while also generating additional government revenue. SERI urges policymakers to consider this as a crucial next step in Malaysia's tobacco control strategy.

SERI supports the government's continued efforts in enforcing tobacco control laws and urges maintaining these positive strides. A firm commitment to enforcement, alongside strategic taxation measures, will not only reduce illicit trade but also contribute to improved public health outcomes and increased government revenue.

*SERI is a non-partisan think-tank dedicated to promoting evidence-based policies that address issues of inequality. For more information, please visit [www.seri.my](http://www.seri.my) or email us at [hello@seri.my](mailto:hello@seri.my).*