

'Incognito Market' founder arrested in New York

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A man from Taiwan has been arrested in New York on charges of selling tens of millions of dollars worth of illegal drugs on his dark web "Incognito Market" site.

A 23-year-old man from Taiwan has been arrested on charges of selling tens of millions of dollars worth of illegal drugs online through a site on

the dark web known as the "Incognito Market."

Rui-Siang Lin, also known as "Pharoah," was arrested at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York on Saturday and was to appear in court on Monday, the Justice Department said.

"As alleged, Rui-Siang Lin was the architect of Incognito, a \$100 million dark web scheme to traffic deadly drugs to the United States and around the world," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement.

Incognito Market, which was shut down in March, was an online dark web marketplace that allowed users to buy and sell illegal drugs anonymously, according to the Justice Department.

Hundreds of kilograms (pounds) of cocaine, methamphetamines and other drugs were sold on Incognito Market since its launch in October 2020, it said.

"Under the promise of anonymity, Lin's alleged operation offered the purchase of lethal drugs and fraudulent prescription medication on a global scale," said James Smith, an assistant director in the FBI's New York office.

Users of Incognito Market were able to search thousands of listings for illegal narcotics, including heroin, cocaine, LSD, MDMA, oxycodone, methamphetamines, ketamine, and alprazolam.

Vendors paid five percent of the purchase price of every sale to "Incognito Market," providing Lin with millions of dollars of profits, the Justice Department said.

Lin faces up to life in prison if convicted of narcotics conspiracy.

Taipei's foreign ministry spokesman Jeff Liu said during a regular briefing Tuesday that Lin had been working since November at Taiwan's embassy in St Lucia, an eastern Caribbean nation that is one of the Asian island's few allies.

He had applied to work as part of the embassy's technical corps in lieu of military service—mandatory for Taiwanese men—and had "behaved normally".

Expected to be discharged in July, Lin applied for leave and left St Lucia on May 18, Liu said.

He "was scheduled to go to Singapore via New York when he was arrested by the police in New York on May 19," he said, adding that Taiwan was closely monitoring the case.

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