

ApiraSol

E-CIGARETTES IN EGYPT 2024/2025 – Q2

SUPPLY CHAIN INTELLIGENCE
APRIL 2026



Overview

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**INTRODUCTION &
METHODOLOGY**

Introduction

ApiraSol has been investigating the routes, brands, and entities involved in the trade of illicit e-cigarettes across various countries worldwide for several years.

In this particular research conducted in 2025, ApiraSol focused on the global illicit e-cigarette trade, drawing from trade data as well as open sources such as enforcement news, press releases from customs agencies, academic research papers, and online intelligence reports. The period covered for trade data spans January 2024 to December 2024, while enforcement-related news generally covers the years 2024 to 2025.

The Illicit E-Cigarette Trade: A Growing Global Challenge

The illicit e-cigarette trade is becoming a significant force reshaping the global nicotine market, fueled by rapid growth and mounting regulatory complexity. According to Euromonitor International, the illicit e-cigarette market was valued at **USD 47 billion in 2024**, representing over **70% of global spending** and roughly **three-quarters of total volume—equivalent to 605 billion cigarettes**. Furthermore, Euromonitor reported that illicit e-cigarette products exceed **80% penetration in North America, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, and Asia Pacific**,

while Western Europe, though lower, continues to face persistent illicit trade despite increasing legislative pressures.

Regulatory Frameworks Driving Illicit Trade

Stringent bans and fragmented regulations often unintentionally fuel underground trade. Bans do not necessarily eliminate demand for e-cigarettes; where consumer interest persists despite such measures, gaps in legal supply may arise, creating opportunities for illicit suppliers to fill unmet demand. Even in countries with robust regulatory frameworks, unintended consequences may arise—strict compliance requirements and high taxation can make legal products more expensive and less accessible, while the convenience of illicit channels, including online and delivery-based sources, may further draw consumers toward cheaper, non-compliant alternatives. These conditions typically incentivize smuggling and the use of transshipment hubs in regions with weaker oversight, allowing illicit goods to infiltrate regulated markets.

Complex regulations also often create loopholes that illicit networks exploit, such as mislabeling products or routing shipments through multiple jurisdictions to obscure origins. While strong regulations aim to protect public health, without equally strong

enforcement, these often end up driving demand for illicit products rather than curbing it.

China's Regulatory Gaps and Insufficient Enforcements

China produces the vast majority of e-cigarettes globally, making its regulatory framework critical to controlling illicit trade. The **Administrative Measures for Electronic Cigarettes** (effective May 1, 2022) require that all e-cigarette products comply with mandatory national standards and that producers, exporters, and retailers obtain licenses from the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration (STMA). Similarly, the **Administrative Rules for E-Cigarettes Import-Export Trade** (issued October 2022) stipulate that only licensed exporters can ship products abroad, and exported goods must either meet the destination country's regulations or adhere to China's national standards.

In practice, however, exports are not sufficiently controlled. Loopholes in licensing, weak oversight of small-scale producers, and limited monitoring of export compliance allow unlicensed operators to bypass official channels.

Compounding these issues is weak enforcement in many destination countries. These challenges are amplified by the growing use of digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps, and

informal online channels, which make detection and enforcement even harder.

Without stronger controls and enforcement mechanisms in China, and investment in monitoring capabilities in destination countries, illicit trade will continue to thrive despite regulatory efforts.

On December 18, 2025, China's General Office of the State Council issued a policy document titled "Opinions on Combating Tobacco-Related Illegal Activities Across the Entire Chain", which sets out a comprehensive enforcement strategy against illicit tobacco and nicotine products. The Opinions explicitly bring electronic cigarettes and other nicotine-containing products under strengthened regulatory scrutiny, calling for full-chain enforcement against the illegal production, wholesale, transportation, sale, and "export re-flow" of e-cigarettes and related products. This includes tightening oversight of e-cigarette manufacturing and supply chains, cracking down on unauthorized operations, and treating unlawful export and smuggling back into China as enforcement priorities alongside traditional tobacco smuggling.

The text of the Opinions does not designate exports to overseas destination markets as independent enforcement targets; rather, references to other countries and cross-border cooperation are tied specifically to preventing illegal e-cigarette exports from re-entering China's domestic market. This confirms that the

primary focus is safeguarding China’s domestic regulatory objectives, public health, and market order, with international cooperation positioned mainly as a means to curb the re-flow of illicit products back into China. The effectiveness of China in stepping up its enforcement efforts to control the illicit trade of tobacco and nicotine products remains to be seen.

Amid the alarming surge of illicit market activity and mounting regulatory complexity, ApiraSol’s 2025 investigation into the global e-cigarette trade will map illicit trade flows, analyze seizure patterns across countries and regions, and uncover the mechanisms enabling this shadow economy.

Methodology

This report has been prepared using various data sources, including (but not limited to):

- Publicly available customs trade data for the period January 2024 - December 2024. For those countries covered in this report that don’t make their customs data publicly available, data has been obtained from the mirrored data of other countries.
- Statistical data for the period January 2024 - June 2025.
- News articles relating to enforcement and seizures.

Terminology and Definitions

Statistical Data - Numerical information representing measurable aspects of economic, demographic, social, or environmental phenomena, as produced by national statistical offices, government agencies, or intergovernmental organizations.

Trade Data - Information on the movement of goods and services between countries, typically reported by customs authorities and presented in terms of import and export volumes, values, origin, and destination.

Enforcement News - Reports and updates issued by law enforcement, customs, or regulatory agencies on activities such as investigations, product seizures, arrests, policy actions, and other official measures.

In the trade data, Origin and Destination Countries refer to the following:

Origin Countries - Shipment Origin Countries declared in publicly available trade data between January 2024 - June 2025.

Destination Countries - Shipment Destination Countries declared in publicly available trade data between January 2024 - June 2025.

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E-CIGARETTE TRADE -
EGYPT

Summary

The 2024 statistical data for e-cigarette shipments from China to Egypt indicate a substantial statistical gap: China's declared exports amounted to \$21.5 million, whereas Egypt's reported imports totaled just \$7.3 million—a difference of approximately \$14.2 million. This discrepancy highlights core challenges in the reliability and interpretation of bilateral trade figures for regulated products.

Several key factors contributed to this statistical gap:

- **Regulatory Environment:** Egypt has strict controls and regulatory requirements for e-cigarette imports, including registration, safety standards, and customs approval. However, gaps in enforcement and shifting legal frameworks can complicate accurate reporting and facilitate informal or unauthorized flows.
- **Re-Routing:** Some shipments may have been diverted through third countries, regional logistics hubs, or alternative entry ports, obscuring their actual origin and destination and reducing direct traceability in official records.
- **Misdeclaration and Evasion:** Exporters and importers might deliberately misdeclare shipments, undervalue consignments, or inaccurately label products to sidestep regulatory scrutiny, avoid taxes, and reduce detection risk.

- **Incomplete or Delayed Reporting:** Some shipments lack complete data—such as shipment weight or transport mode—hampering transparency and granular reconciliation.
- **Customs Data Limitations:** Differences in classification standards, documentation practices, and valuation methods between Egypt and its trading partners exacerbate discrepancies, making reconciliation of bilateral trade figures challenging
- **Prevalence of Smuggling and Illicit Trade:** Enforcement actions reveal active attempts to smuggle counterfeit and unauthorized e-cigarettes, including THC-laced and drug-tainted devices, disguised as coffee, everyday goods, or sent via personal luggage and parcels. Some seized products have originated not only from China but also the United States. Ongoing arrests and product seizures demonstrate persistent illicit activity managed by both organized networks and individuals.

In summary, the Egyptian e-cigarette market is marked by substantial statistical gaps between declared exports and imports, complex and sometimes informal trade flows, and active enforcement focused on a diverse and evolving range of illicit products. Persistent monitoring, robust border control, and legal adaptation remain essential to address the risks posed by unauthorized e-cigarette imports.

Regulatory Overview

Egypt has recently transitioned from a prohibitionist stance to a regulated framework for e-cigarettes. In 2011, the Ministry of Health and Population banned the import, sale, and marketing of e-cigarettes through a decision by the High Technical Committee of Drugs. However, this ban was lifted in 2022, allowing the legal importation and commercialization of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products. This shift aimed to curb the black market and align Egypt with regional markets like the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

E-cigarettes are now regulated under Egyptian Standard 8205-1/2023, which covers both nicotine-containing and nicotine-free products. The standard sets requirements for ingredients, labeling including graphic health warnings, packaging, and safety for single-use and refillable devices. Additional standards—such as ES 2023/8685 and ES 2023/8724—govern electronic device safety and the sale and storage of alternative tobacco products.

The legal age for purchasing and using e-cigarettes is 18, consistent with traditional tobacco laws. While there are currently no national restrictions on public use, authorities recommend avoiding vaping in religious or culturally sensitive spaces. Advertising remains restricted under broader tobacco control laws, and the Ministry of Health continues to issue public warnings about the health risks of vaping, especially among youth.

Statistical Data (China as Origin)

China's declared exports of e-cigarettes to Egypt in 2024 totaled \$21,540,000, while Egypt's declared imports from China reached \$7,349,000—creating a **discrepancy of approximately \$14.2 million**. This substantial statistical gap suggests significant underreporting on the import side or possible diversion of shipments through third countries, highlighting persistent inconsistencies in cross-border trade data and the potential for informal or unrecorded flows.

Total Value 2024:

- Total Exports from China 2024: \$21,540,000
- Total Imports from China 2024: \$7,349,000
- **Statistical Gap: \$14,191,000**

EXPORTS OF E-CIGARETTES FROM CHINA TO EGYPT - STATISTICAL DATA (ITC DATABASE)

HS Code	HS Code Description	ORIGIN COUNTRY	DESTINATION COUNTRY	Value in 2024 (Unit : US Dollar thousand)	Value in 2025-Q1 -Q2 (Unit : US Dollar thousand)
24041200	Other products containing nicotine, intended for inhalation without combustion	CHINA	EGYPT	6,441	3,307
24041990	Other products containing nicotine substitutes, intended for inhalation without combustion	CHINA	EGYPT	1	0
24041910	Other products containing tobacco substitutes, intended for inhalation without combustion	CHINA	EGYPT	0	12
85434000	Electronic cigarettes and similar personal electric vaporizing devices	CHINA	EGYPT	15,098	5,830
Total:				21,540	9,149

IMPORTS OF E-CIGARETTES TO EGYPT FROM CHINA - STATISTICAL DATA (ITC DATABASE)

HS Code	HS Code Description	ORIGIN COUNTRY	DESTINATION COUNTRY	Value in 2024 (Unit : US Dollar thousand)	Value in 2025-Q1 -Q2 (Unit : US Dollar thousand)
24041210000	Products containing nicotine, intended for inhalation without combustion	CHINA	EGYPT	2,417	N/A
24041910000	Products containing tobacco or nicotine substitutes, intended for inhalation without combustion . . .	CHINA	EGYPT	146	N/A
85434000000	Electronic cigarettes and similar personal electric vaporizing devices	CHINA	EGYPT	4,786	N/A
Total:				7,349	-



EGYPT STATISTICAL DATA



Exports from China to Egypt

21,540,000

Total 2024 Value (USD)
1H 2025 Value (USD): 9,149,000

Imports to Egypt from China

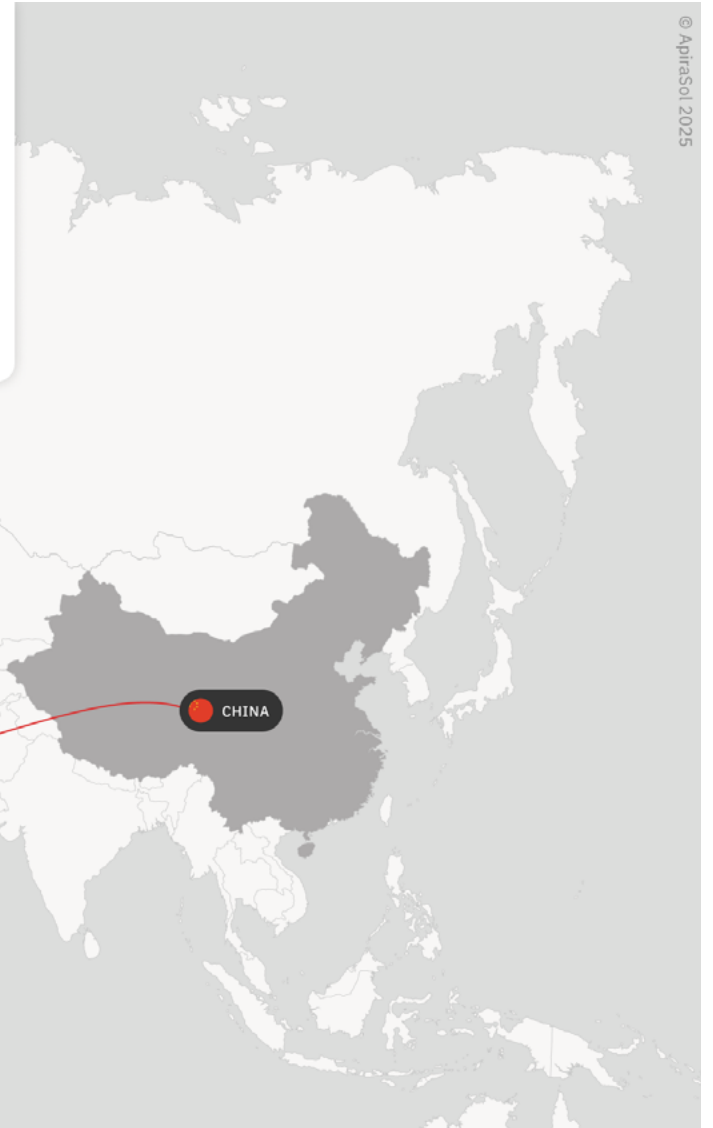
7,349,000

Total 2024 Value (USD)
1H 2025 Value (USD): N/A

Statistical Data Gap *

14,191,000

* Difference between the Exports and the Declared Imports (USD)



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The online articles report on **seizures of illegal e-cigarette products in Egypt.**

Egyptian customs and airport authorities have intercepted counterfeit and drug-laced e-cigarettes at Cairo International Airport and the port of Aswan. Shipments have included products from the United States, some disguised as coffee or other everyday items to evade screening. Notable cases involved the seizure of THC-containing e-cigarettes and the arrest of a singer for possession of cannabis oil e-cigarettes.

Smuggling attempts frequently exploit gaps in parcel, luggage, and express shipping controls, illustrating the flexibility and persistence of illegal networks. Enforcement actions have targeted both high-profile individuals and ordinary passengers, suggesting broad market demand and widespread trafficking channels. The presence of counterfeit and narcotics-laced devices, including those containing marijuana extracts and unverified substances, poses increased consumer safety risks and regulatory challenges.

Publicized raids and arrests serve as deterrents, but also highlight the adaptability of traffickers shifting to new concealment methods and supply routes. The evolving nature of seized products—from conventional e-cigarettes to narcotic-infused and branded devices—demonstrates shifting consumer preferences and market strategies, as well as increasing sophistication amongst smugglers.

These trends underscore the need for heightened vigilance, cross-agency cooperation, and updated screening practices to address both the complexity and the health risks associated with illicit vaping products entering Egypt.

- **Locations of Seizures:** Cairo International Airport, Aswan port, express courier parcel hubs.
- **Products Seized:** Smuggled vaping devices, drug-laced (THC/marijuana) e-cigarettes, unauthorized and counterfeit e-cigarettes.
- **Brands Seized:** Brand names typically not disclosed; seized items were mainly generic, counterfeit, or unregistered products.
- **Methods:** Products concealed in personal luggage, disguised as common goods, hidden within cargo shipments, or sent via international parcels.
- **Enforcement:** Customs and airport officials screened, intercepted, and confiscated unauthorized goods; arrests included both high-profile individuals and ordinary passengers. Egypt maintains strict vigilance and regular operations against illicit e-cigarette imports.



EGYPT ILLCIT TRADE OVERVIEW

Egyptian customs and airport authorities have intercepted counterfeit and drug-laced e-cigarettes at Cairo International Airport and the port of Aswan. Shipments have included products from the United States, some disguised as coffee or other everyday items. Notable cases involved the seizure of THC-containing e-cigarettes and the arrest of a singer for possession of cannabis oil e-cigarettes.

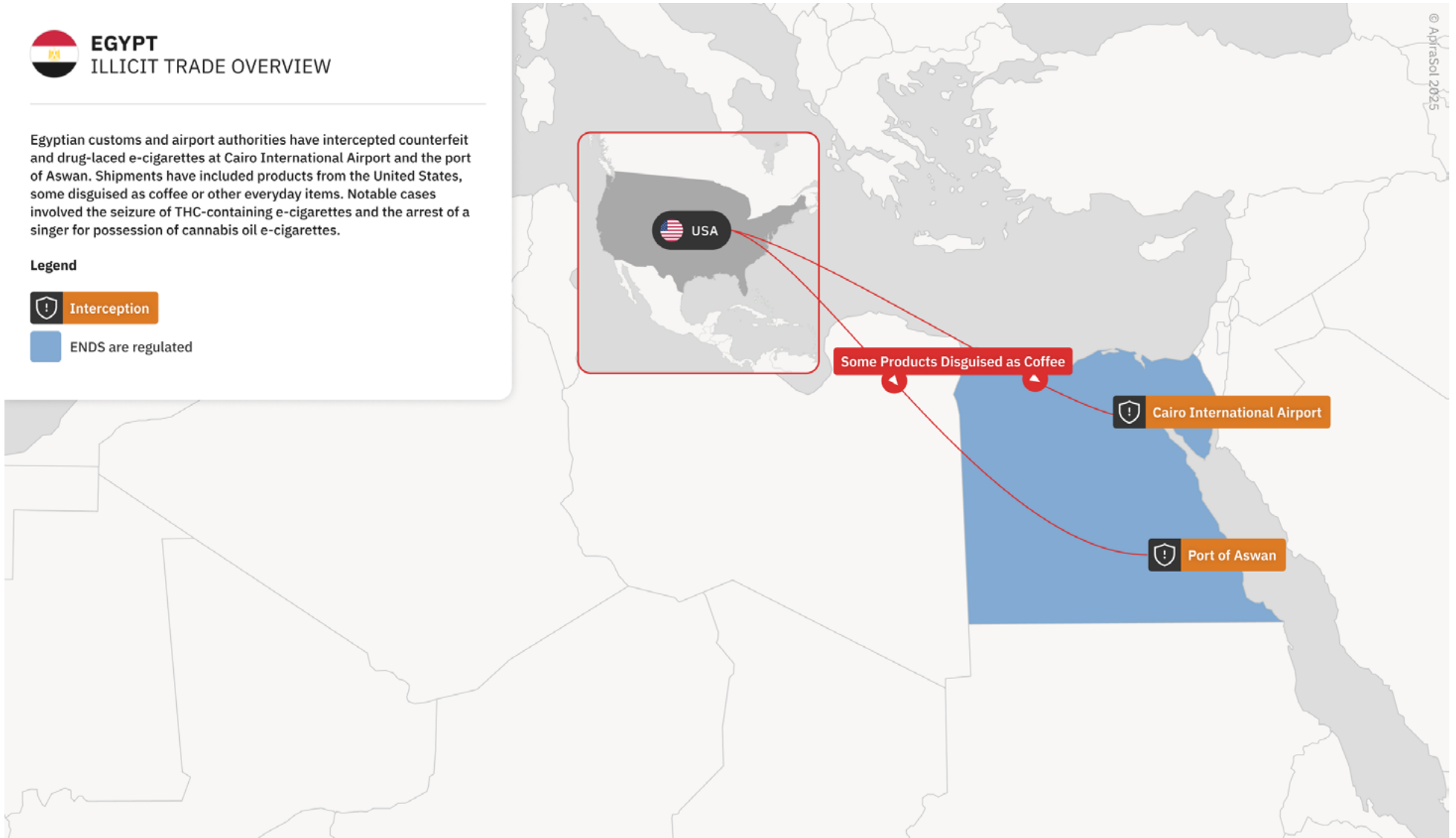
Legend



Interception



ENDS are regulated



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Egyptian customs at Aswan, aided by criminal investigators and anti-narcotics officers, intercepted a package from the United States falsely declared as coffee, instead containing 10 e-cigarettes labeled with THC —banned in Egypt.

Egyptian Customs Seize Smuggled Marijuana E-Cigarettes in Aswan

Regulations by 2FIRSTS.ai

Oct. 26, 2023



Legend



Interception



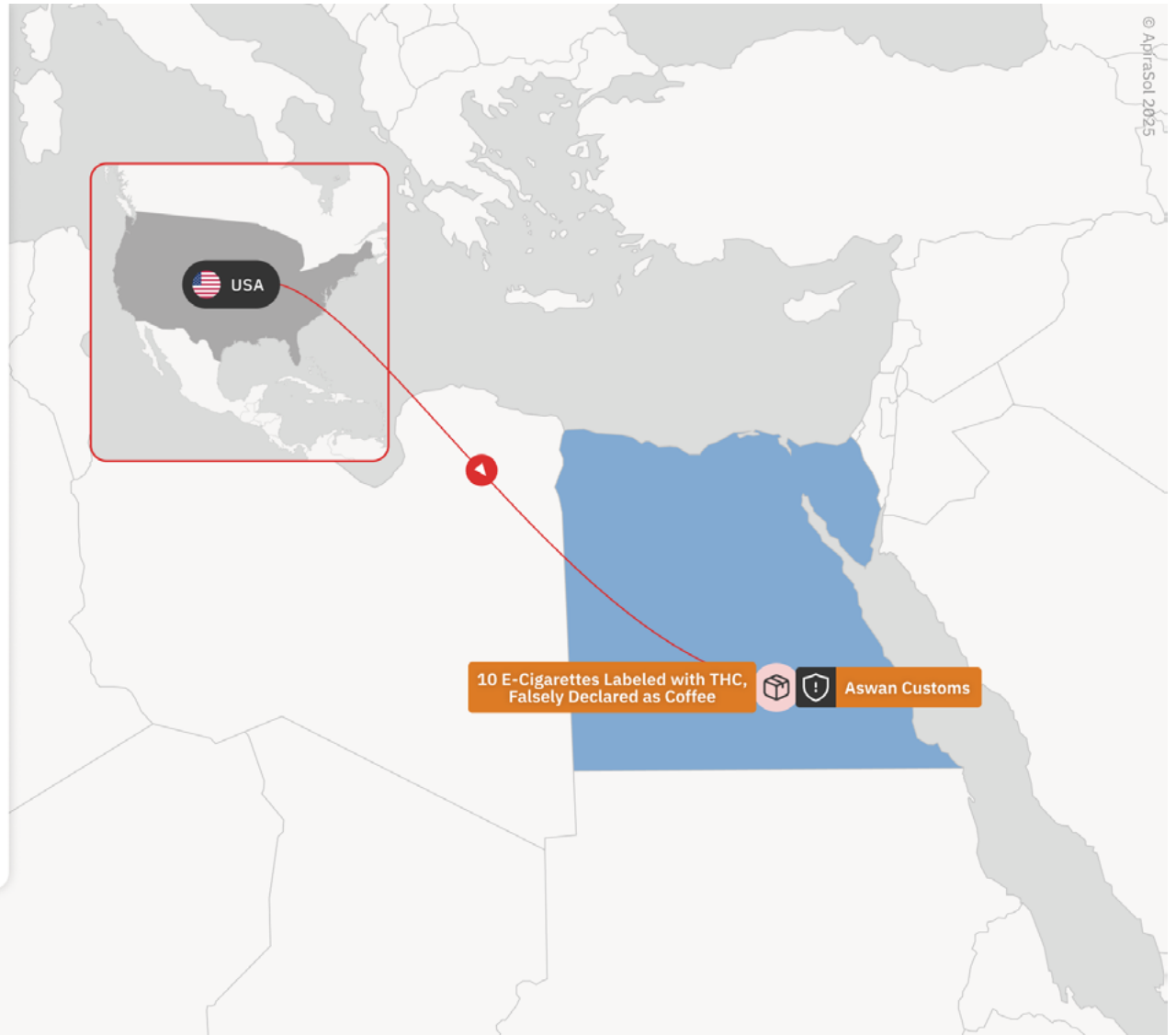
Package



ENDS are regulated

Source

<https://www.2firsts.com/news/egyptian-customs-seize-smuggled-marijuana-e-cigarettes-in-aswan>



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