

SARS makes R11.6m rhino horn bust at OR Tambo

Rhino horn worth R11.6m has been discovered at OR Tambo International Airport, according to the South African Revenue Service (SARS).



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A total 41 pieces of rhino horn were valued at R115.66m in a consignment declared as “fine art” on Tuesday, 14 July, by customs teams aided by detector dogs.

SARS said the consignment of six boxes, containing the horns that had been concealed in carbon paper and foil, was destined for Kuala Lumpur.

The South African Police Services’ Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations (the Hawks) have been alerted of the incident. In addition, a criminal case has been registered with the South African Police Service (SAPS) for further investigation.

Other illegal finds

Meanwhile, SARS customs officials also found abalone valued at close to R1m, destined for Hong Kong, and ephedrine valued at R600,000, which had been hidden in two printer cartridges and destined for Madagascar.

SARS Commissioner Edward Kieswetter lauded officials for Tuesday's finds.

"Criminal and illicit economic activities are rife and result in billions of rands of losses in tax and customs revenue to the fiscus. In addition, it does seriously harm to our domestic economy. I am therefore very pleased with the success at ORTIA by our customs officials.

"I wish to express sincere appreciation to our customs officers for this diligence in fighting these unacceptable criminal activities," he said.

Kieswetter issued a stern warning to those who are engaged in criminal syndicate work.

"We will spare no effort in confronting and dealing with any criminal acts that threatens the well-being of our country and depriving our future generation from witnessing the beauty of nature as represented by our rhinoceros. We will not rest until all are caught," he said.

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