

## Media Releases 2009

### 17 February 2009 - Special Task Team formed to tackle trafficking of contraband through airports

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#### Special Task Team formed to tackle trafficking of contraband through airports

**Johannesburg, 17 February 2009:** A special task team comprising representatives from South African Airways (SAA), Airports Company SA (Acsa), South African Revenue Service (SARS) officials and the South African Police Service (SAPS) was today formed to identify immediate additional measures aimed at stopping the drug traffic through SAA and any other carriers that operate at SA airports.

The team will review the additional interventions implemented by SAA since the first incident in January 2009 and manage the urgent implementation of additional security measures. The team will also identify potential risk areas involving the trafficking of contraband across airport operations.

Security was stepped up following the arrests in January. Amongst the measures introduced by SAA were changing security systems, physical searches of bags and using dogs airside. These and other measures will now be extended across all SAA international flights.

Further, SAA can confirm that all 15 crew members (3 cockpit and 12 cabin crew) detained by UK authorities in London have now been released. The group, who operated flight SA234 from Johannesburg to London yesterday morning, were detained by authorities in London on Monday after contraband was found in a piece of hand luggage on the crew bus at Heathrow Airport.

The crew members have been released on their own cognisance, and will be required to appear back in London on 6th April 2009. At this stage the conditions of their release are unknown. Arrangements for their possible return to South Africa are being made, but these will depend on the conditions of their release.

The airline is co-operating fully with the British authorities in an investigation which is currently under way. An investigation in Johannesburg, involving SAA Aviation Security and the SAPS Crime Intelligence Unit, is also under way.

This incident comes after SAA crew members were arrested in London in January 2009 following the discovery of illegal contraband on a crew bus. SAA co-operated closely with authorities in that investigation which resulted in the speedy arrest of an SAA crew member and a security guard employed by the company contracted by SAA to screen crew members' luggage.

SAA remains committed to a zero tolerance approach towards the use of the airline's services for any criminal activity and will continue to closely monitor the situation going forward.

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