

Media Releases 2010

Joint SARS Customs and SAPS operations leads to arrest of Johannesburg couple

Johannesburg, 13 January 2009 - A joint operation between South African Revenue Service (SARS) Customs and the South African Police Service (SAPS) resulted in the arrest of a Johannesburg couple suspected to have been in possession of endangered species, illicit goods.

SARS Customs officials received a tip off from a member of the community today about the suspected activities at the property in Bruma and immediately contacted the SAPS to assist on the operation.

During the operation SARS Customs and SAPS officials seized several square shaped blocks of suspected ivory along with 210 bottles of liquor and 15 cartons of cigarettes which have been seized due to their illicit nature as the property owner was found without the required Customs declaration forms. 2kg of abalone concealed in a large coffee tin was also recovered on the property.

Investigators on the scene also found medical equipment that indicates that an illegal abortion clinic was being run on the premises. Further searches into the property yielded a sizeable amount of Chinese medicine, syringes and what at the moment appears to be a consulting room that may be used to conduct abortions. The consulting room contained what is believed to be a gynaecology examination table, examination equipment and a bin with medical waste suggesting recent activity in the room.

SARS Customs has handed the case over to the SAPS Organised Crime and local detective unit. The Department of health is conducting its own investigation into the suspected medical facility.

SAPS Superintendent Lungelo Dlamini said: "Today's enforcement attests to what we can achieve through continual cooperation as a society, not just as law enforcement agencies of government but also what we can achieve if members of the community work with us."

Members of the community who may suspect similar practices are encouraged to contact the SARS Fraud and Anti Corruption Hotline at 0800 00 28 70 or the SAPS Crime Hotline at 08600 10 111 or SMS 32211.

SARS Customs would like to thank the South African Police Service willing support on the operation and will continue to cooperate with the investigation where required.

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