

Media Releases 2010

3 men arrested for attempted smuggling of 48,3kg of rhino horn valued at R 2 416 750

Pretoria 15 June 2010 – Three individuals were arrested last week in three days for the attempted smuggling of rhino horn out of South Africa at OR Tambo International Airport.

SARS National Enforcement officials in conjunction with members of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks), South African National Parks (SANPARKS) and Gauteng Department Environmental Affairs arrested two individuals 30 minutes prior to the opening of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

The two were carrying almost 18,8 (6 pieces) and 16,6kg (12 pieces) separately or nearly 37kg jointly and were destined for Vietnam before they were apprehended. The horns, wrapped in plastic bags and hidden under clothes, were detected by an alert ACSA official who contacted SARS officials.

The Rhino horn is estimated to be worth close to R1,7m, making it one of the largest CITIES SARS led seizure conducted to date. The suspects are due to be appearing in court imminently.

On Wednesday, SARS Customs and South Africa Police Service Organised Crime officials arrested a foreign student travelling to the same country with 11,7kg of rhino horn with an estimated value of R605 000.

The six pieces of horn were concealed in the same way as the seizure of Friday and were initially noted by an Airport official before they were confirmed via the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITIES) detector dog from SARS Customs.

The suspects will be charged under Section 15 (b) iii of the Customs Act as well as the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004).

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