

Media Releases 2011

Illegal cigarettes with an estimated street value of over R2 million confiscated

Pretoria -20 May 2011 – A joint operation by the SARS Customs Border Control Unit and the South African Police Service (SAPS) has resulted in the detention of about 431 master cases of illegal cigarettes, or about 4,3 million cigarettes.

In addition, the illegal cigarettes would have brought about R 2,5-million in import duty and Value Added Tax into the SARS coffers.

Acting on a tip-off the customs and police officials yesterday (19 May 2011) raided a smallholding in Cullinan outside Pretoria and a warehouse in Isando outside Johannesburg.

The first raid was carried out at midday at the warehouse in Isando, where the officials found suspects loading cigarettes into three vehicles. Upon closer inspection it was discovered that the cigarette packaging did not have the required diamond stamp and the suspects could not produce clearance documents for the cigarettes.

At the second raid carried out late last night the team received information that cigarettes were being smuggled in a bus that had just arrived at the smallholding in Cullinan from Zimbabwe. It was then discovered that the bus had several false compartments which contained illegal cigarettes.

Five vehicles were detained, including the bus with false compartments, and 11 people arrested at the two locations. The 11 suspects are yet to be formally charged.

SARS will continue to take a tough stance against all forms of smuggling and would like encourage the public to report any suspicious activities to its Anti-Corruption and Fraud hotline on 0800 00 2870.

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