

SARS customs seizes drugs worth R60m

PRETORIA: Seven people - including those who work at the SA Revenue Service (SARS) - were slapped with jail and suspended sentences for fraud in the month of July, SARS said in a statement on Monday, 5 August 2013.



The tax collecting authority's customs officials also prevented drugs worth over R60-million that passengers either tried to bring in or take out of the country at the OR Tambo International airport in the same period.

Releasing an update on its operations to combat crimes such as smuggling, fraud and abuse of the tax system, SARS released details of people who were sentenced at various courts.

This included Abel Mothoa, who was sentenced to five years direct imprisonment at the Johannesburg Magistrates Court on 1 July 2013, for tax fraud after being arrested in 2012, when he filed returns for clients while he was not a registered tax practitioner.

Ansie Naude, a former SARS employee, together with a son and Adriaan Fourie were each sentenced to 30 months in jail, suspended for five years after being found guilty of fraud in April 2013 at the Roodepoort Regional Court.

Another man, Imraan Khan, was found guilty of a more serious charge of money laundering and fraud and because he is a terminally ill patient, his 5 year direct prison sentence was suspended for five years.

A fraudulent tax return of R5.62-million had been paid into his bank account. SARS has already recovered R5.49 million and aims to approach the courts to recover the remaining R123 687.

"In the period from 1 to 31 July 2013, SARS Customs teams have prevented just over 20 kilos of cocaine valued at almost R19 million, and almost 150 kilos of tik, valued at R42.6 million, from entering the country.

"In all cases, the drugs seized and the individuals involved were handed over to the SAPS for further action. The drugs were seized in 7 different interventions," a SARS spokesperson said.

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