

Drugs, currency intercepted at OR Tambo

The South African Revenue Service's (Sars) customs division intercepted a number of illicit goods at OR Tambo International Airport this week.



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They are the latest in a string of illicit goods and drug busts valued at close to R15 million.

On Monday, two non-related male passengers travelling from South Africa to Dubai were intercepted and questioned.

“The travellers, in both instances, then admitted that they were in possession of currency. Upon further questioning, the two passengers could not provide explanations or evidence as to how they had acquired the currency.

“They were escorted off and taken to the customs control area where their respective luggage was searched.”

Sars said upon inspection of the first passenger's luggage, US Dollars equivalent to R6,114,794 was found concealed in paper wrapped with brown tape.

The second passenger was also allegedly found in possession of US Dollars equivalent to R3,079,440. The currency was concealed in paper wrapped with brown tape.

The currency was confiscated and both passengers were handed over to the South African Police Service (Saps) for further investigation.

On Tuesday, Sars discovered drugs to the value of R4,800,000 in a shipment from South Africa destined for the United Kingdom.

The shipment was profiled for examination when a customs detector dog reacted positively.

"The shipment had been declared as 'Car Parts General', however, upon physical examination of the contents, a booster charger was found which felt unusually heavy.

"The part was X-rayed and square shaped image impressions were observed, which led to the part being dismantled revealing 15 blocks concealing a white powdery substance which was wrapped with black rubber and foil.

"The powder was analysed and it tested positive for cocaine," said Sars, adding that the shipment was handed over to the police for further investigation.

In another incident, a parcel declared as books which was heading to Australia from South Africa was intercepted when a detector dog reacted positively to the package.

Sars said, upon inspection, four books were found containing sheets of plastic with a white powdery substance.

"A drug testing kit was administered and tested positive for cocaine. The goods weighed 2.5kg, which has an estimated value of R750,000. They were handed over to Saps for further investigations.

In a separate incident, on 28 July, a Brazilian female passenger was intercepted while disembarking from Sao Paulo to Johannesburg.

The passenger was questioned and her luggage was searched with nothing suspicious, however, risk indicators suggested she might be a drug mule, said Sars.

The passenger was taken to the hospital and an X-ray was conducted, which revealed foreign objects in her abdomen. She expelled several "cocaine bullets" with an estimated value of R285,000.

Sars also found a parcel with plastic containers concealing 250 cannabis heads with an estimated value of R25,000; a magazine concealing two travel documents valued at R1,400 and a male passenger disembarking from Addis Ababa to Johannesburg with an alleged fraudulent visa was refused entry into South Africa.

Sars said it appreciated the high level of active collaboration between Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), SAPS, the Department of Home Affairs, the Asset Forfeiture Unit in the National Prosecuting Authority and the State Security Agency which lead to effective detection and successful prosecutions.

The service said it will continue to remain on high alert and vigilant at all ports of entries to stem the tide of illicit/illegal goods coming through or out of South Africa's borders.

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