



## Rhino horns intercepted at airport

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A courier parcel containing 16 pieces of rhino horn was discovered at the Eros Airport on Friday.

The parcel was destined for Malaysia via Johannesburg.

The horns were concealed in a parcel from a local courier company, which contained coffee boxes.

This was confirmed to Namibian Sun by the Inspector General of the Namibian Police, Sebastian Ndeitunga, who said that the modus operandi was similar to previous incidents in which rhino horns had been smuggled out of the country.

A poaching syndicate is suspected to be operating in Namibia and sending parcels to China, declaring the contents as "coffee".

Earlier this year 12 pieces of rhino horn declared as "coffee" from Namibia were seized by Hong Kong customs officers. The rhino horn, weighing about 6.6kg and with an estimated value of about \$1.3 million, was found in two express air parcels at Hong Kong International Airport on March 22.

In another incident, three Chinese nationals were arrested last year December at a police checkpoint at Kappsfarm with several rhino horn products concealed in empty coffee tins.

Ndeitunga said the syndicate was changing its tactics and using different routes.

"We are still facing serious challenges with regards to poaching," he said.

On Tuesday another poached rhino carcass was discovered at Kliprivier in the Grootberg area of the Kunene Region. The rhino had been shot and its horns were discovered at the scene.

Ndeitunga said there was another incident of rhino poaching in the Erongo Region this week. Further details are not available at this stage.

Ndeitunga issued a stern warning to courier companies that are being used in these types of crimes.

He said their businesses were being tarnished and they should work on identifying these crimes.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/horns-intercepted-at-airport2017-05-190.jpg>)

VIGILANT: Officers stationed at Windhoek's Eros Airport have intercepted a courier parcel containing rhino horn, destined for Malaysia. Photo: file

Ndeitunga said that very soon criminals would be using coffins to smuggle drugs, ivory and rhino horns out of the country if they were not stopped.

“We have to be vigilant and suspect any suspicious behaviour. It should be the task of everybody, whether you are working in the hotel, telecommunications, you should report suspicious behaviour to the police.”

Ndeitunga also congratulated the officers at Eros Airport for being vigilant in detecting the rhino horns in the parcel.

“I called them in to congratulate them and you can see that they have a love for their job. We are proud of them and all officers should follow their example.”

Investigations are continuing.

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