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Pangolin [PHOTO: National Geographic]

Nigeria Customs intercepts huge haul of pangolin scales, ivory

Authorities put the value of the seizure at N952million and say the items were headed to Vietnam.

By Agency Report — January 26, 2021 2 min read

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Mohammed Abba-Kura, Customs Comptroller, said at a media briefing on Tuesday in Lagos that the items were contained in a one-unit 20-foot container with number CSLU 2362640 heading to Haiphong, Vietnam.

He said the items, falsely declared as furniture, comprised 162 sacks of pangolin scales weighing 8,800kg and 57 sacks of mixed endangered species of various sizes such as ivory/animal horns, lion bones and others.

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Mr Abba-Kura said the total weight of the items stood at 854,719 tonnes, valued N952 million.

Nigeria is now reputed as the main hub for traffickers sending the scales of African pangolins to Asia, where they are used for medicines. The Nigerian Customs has announced seizure of large quantities of the animal parts in recent years.

“On Jan 21, based on credible intelligence, Customs operatives at the export seat of Apapa command successfully detected and arrested one unit of 20 feet container which was processed for export and falsely declared as furniture component,” Mr Abba-Kura said, according to the News Agency of Nigeria.

“Immediately the container was opened, logs were seen in front, and upon 100 per cent physical examination of the container, elephant tusk and the pangolin scales were seen concealed by the logs.”

He said an agent linked to the consignment were arrested.

The comptroller said after due investigation, the service headquarters would take necessary action in line with environmental laws, guidelines, protocols, conventions and treaties on environment.

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He said for the avoidance of doubt, their action of impounding the container was in line with the provision of Section 147 of Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) Cap 45, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 and in line with schedule 6 of Common External Tariff.

“The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES 1973) entails that Customs Administration all over the world protects wildlife by intercepting illegal trade on such animals

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