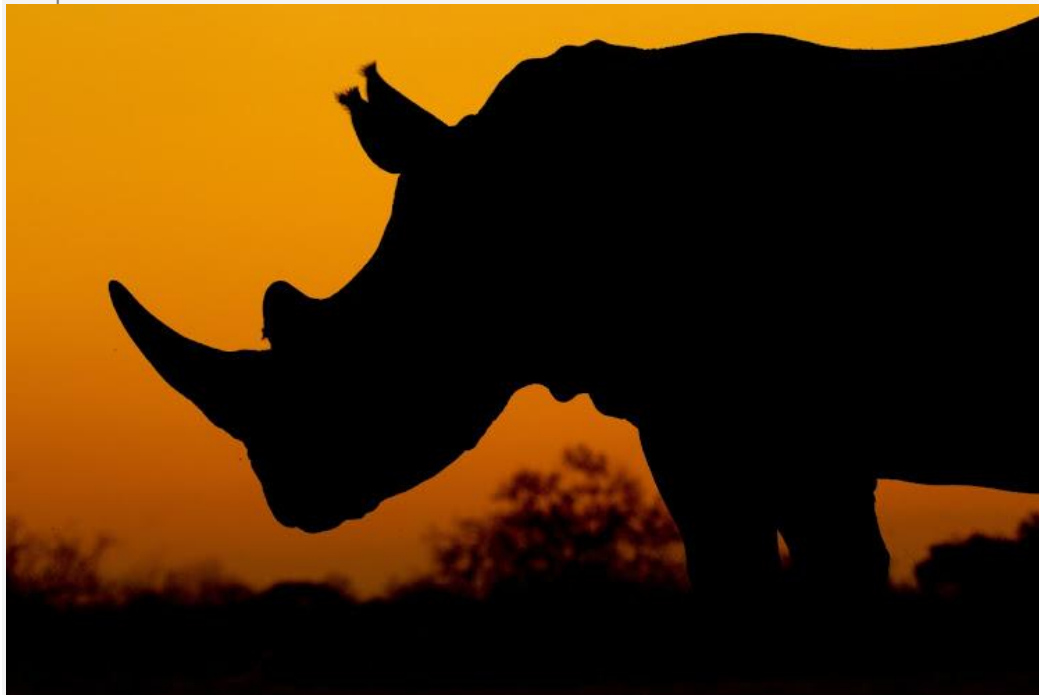


SOUTH AFRICA

SA woman bound for Dubai nabbed with a dozen rhino horns at OR Tambo

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A dozen rhino horns were found in the possession of woman leaving SA for Dubai. Stock photo.

Image: 123RF

A South African woman leaving the country for Dubai was nabbed this week with 12 rhino horns in her luggage at [OR Tambo International Airport](#) in Johannesburg, according to the SA Revenue Service (Sars).

Sars said they were reacting on a tip-off when they stopped and searched her. The woman was taken aside at the customs area, where officials asked to search her luggage.

“The two luggage bags and a box were inspected by a baggage scanner that identified irregular images suspected to be rhino horn.

“This led to a physical inspection of the luggage and box in which 12 pieces of rhino horn, weighing 30.7kg, were found. The passenger and the rhino horns were handed to the police, after which a criminal case was opened for investigation,” Sars said.

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Such a trade will likely face competition from a parallel black market because of a strong preference for wild rhino horn

OPINION & ANALYSIS

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The revenue service said it had made significant strides in stopping the smuggling of rhino horns in recent years.

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“Between July 2020 and December 2021, a total of 125 pieces of rhino horn, weighing 452kg, were seized at OR Tambo International Airport.”

These had been concealed in a number of ways, with some described as live plants, others said to be scanners, an HP cartridge developer, a geyser and even coffee beans, among other things.

Sars commissioner [Edward Kieswetter](#) thanked the customs officials.

“We will leave no stone unturned to detect and prosecute these criminal syndicates and individuals who break the law. Sars and the law enforcement agencies will spare no efforts to ensure they are brought to book,” he said.

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