



NEWS

Man arrested at OR Tambo trying to smuggle 26kg of rhino horn in his passenger luggage out of SA



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Johannesburg – A suspect has been arrested at OR Tambo International Airport (Ortia) trying to smuggle rhino horns out of the country.

The 41-year-old man was arrested by members of the South African Police Service while trying to board a flight to Singapore. A security official at the airport alerted police to suspicious-looking items in the suspect's hand luggage.

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Upon further investigation and interrogation of the suspect, police found that the suspect was carrying rhino horn weighing 26kg in his carry-on bag.

The law enforcement officer also confiscated two cellphones that were in the suspect's possession.

The man will appear before the Kempton Park Magistrate's Court on Monday, to face a charge of contravention of the Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 which prohibits the illegal trade of the rhinoceros horn.

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The national commissioner of the South African Police Service (SAPS) General Fannie Masemola has commended a multidisciplinary team established to prevent and clamp down on illicit activities at Ortia for their vigilance

This is the second time in a month that this team has achieved success in curbing the illicit trade of rhino horn.

In April, customs officers of the South African Revenue Service (SARS), in collaboration with other government departments, intercepted the luggage of a female South African passenger at OR Tambo International Airport which contained 12 pieces of rhino horn weighing 30.7kg.

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The interception of the rhino horn came after the SARS customs and other government officials received a tip-off regarding a passenger travelling to Dubai.

The customs team reacted swiftly and accompanied the female passenger to the customs area for further inspection. The two luggage bags and a box were inspected by a baggage scanner that identified irregular images suspected to be rhino horns.

This led to a physical inspection of the luggage and box in which the 12 pieces of rhino horn were found. The passenger with the rhino horn was handed to the SAPS after which a criminal case was opened for further investigation.

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