



# Vietnam seizes 16 kg of smuggled rhino horns, ivory

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By Big News Network

Vietnam has seized 11.8 kilograms of rhino horns and 4.7 kilograms of elephant ivory in checked-in luggage on a flight from Qatar, Vietnam News Agency reported on Thursday.

Customs officers at Noi Bai international airport in Vietnam's capital of Hanoi found the smuggled rhino horns and ivory in 41 packages wrapped in aluminum foil in two sets of luggage of a Vietnamese man who had traveled from Angola, transited through Doha, Qatar, and arrived in Vietnam on Tuesday.

The seizure came after a random check, and the luggage owner claimed that a person had paid him 50 million Vietnamese dong (2,100 U.S. dollars) to carry the packages, said the authorities.

Vietnam seized roughly seven tons of ivory in the largest hauls on record last month after customs authorities in the northern port city of Hai Phong found the illegal cargo in a 20-foot container loaded with peanuts originated from the Republic of Angola, passing through Singapore and destined for Vietnam, according to Vietnam News Agency.

Elephant ivory is coveted because it can be fashioned into items like combs, jewels and ornaments, while rhino horns, when ground to a powder, are believed to have medicinal qualities to cure several diseases.

Vietnam is seen as a transport hub for the illegal trafficking of wildlife, according to the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

The Southeast Asian country has refined its criminal laws on exploiting and trading wildlife with clearer and stricter policies.

Criminals convicted of breaking laws protecting endangered species face up to 15 years in prison and fines of up to 15 billion Vietnamese dong (630,000 U.S. dollars).

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