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Lao Authorities Seize Suspected Rhino Horn at Wattay Airport

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Lao authorities seized over 10 kilograms of rhino horn concealed inside souvenir statues at Wattay International Airport in Vientiane. 15 May 2026. (Photo: Ministry of Agriculture and Environment).

Authorities at Wattay International Airport in Vientiane intercepted four pieces of suspected rhino horn, weighing a total of 10.1 kilograms, on the afternoon of 15 May during passenger screening.

X-ray scans revealed suspicious objects concealed inside black decorative souvenir statues.

The cargo originated in Angola, Africa, on 12 May and passed through two transit countries before arriving in Vientiane, a complex routing designed to obscure the shipment's origin.

Physical inspection confirmed the items resembled rhino horn.

The authorities identified a Vietnamese male suspect, approximately 35 years old. A formal investigation is currently underway.

The Wattay seizure comes amid wider regional enforcement efforts targeting wildlife trafficking.

On 16 May, Thai authorities discovered more than 159 kilograms of contraband along the Mekong riverside in Nong Khai, including [130.9 kilograms of cut ivory](#) and 29

kilograms of animal skeletal remains.

The same day, a Lao woman was found carrying a live monitor lizard and chopped wildlife meat, highlighting the continued challenges of cross-border wildlife smuggling in the region.

