

SARS cracks down on counterfeit clothing

More than R97-million worth of fake clothing was seized by the South African Revenue Service (SARS) in its crackdown on illegal clothing and textile imports this year.



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Customs Investigations show nearly 75,000 counterfeit shoes were confiscated in the same period.

"South Africa's clothing and textile industry has suffered tremendously as a result of the illegal import of counterfeit goods," Customs Investigations' Patrick Moeng said.

"More recently the industry has also borne the brunt of the import of second-hand clothing available for resale in the market." Moeng said the import of counterfeit clothing and textiles and other infringements - including under-declaration and misclassification - was a massive problem.

"As a result, customs is also focusing on plugging the leaks at non-designated border posts," he said.

"Three weeks ago, there was a bust of suspected counterfeit clothing and footwear, with a value of R1.2-million, at Kosi Bay [north-eastern border].

"That border post, in particular, was targeted for being a hotspot of smuggling, due to the lack of controls.

"Every day since the start of the special three-week operation at nondesignated border posts, Customs has detained suspected illicit or illegally smuggled goods.

"Once we have assessed the risk at these border posts, we will focus on strategy and capacity planning at nondesignated ports going forward.

"Many factories have closed down in the past few years due to the proliferation of cheap legitimate imports, as well as the illegal importation of second-hand and counterfeit clothes and shoes, mostly from Asia."



Material hurdles remain

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SARS had introduced measures - such as new risk rules - to address infringements, Moeng said.

"We are working on numerous clothing and textile cases worth millions of rands," he said.

Source: Herald

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