

Sars Customs seize drug powder worth R21m

The South African Revenue Service (Sars) Customs division has made three seizures at the O.R. Tambo International Airport of catalytic converters and crushed powder from the core of a catalytic converter, valued at R21 million.



Source: SANews.gov.za

The revenue collector said the crushed powder extracted from the core of a catalytic converter was contributing to a new drug craze.

“The Customs Dog Detector Unit intercepted the three shipments, weighing 2,649kg, destined for Dubai, the United Kingdom and Jordan,” it said in a statement.

The catalytic converters and the powder extracted from the core of a catalytic converter were concealed in metal drums and bags.

Sars said: “A catalytic converter contains metals such as palladium, rhodium, platinum and gold. Through a refinery process, these precious metals can be extracted and used for the manufacture of jewellery, car parts as well as weaponry.

“The core of a catalytic converter, which cuts the emission of toxic gases, can be crushed into a fine powder and used in the manufacture of a toxic drug. This has led to a spike in the theft of catalytic converters in some countries.”

The consignment was declared as Ceramic Catalyst Sample. The South African Police Service’s Director for Priority Crime Investigations (Hawks) was alerted and the goods were handed over to them for further investigation.

Sars Commissioner Edward Kieswetter praised the Customs officials of the Dog Detector Unit for their vigilance in preventing the illegal trade in substances, which could be used in the manufacture of weaponry and drugs.

“The seizures are evidence of the dedication and commitment of the Sars Customs officials to stamp out the trade in illegal and harmful substances,” he said.