

Media Releases 2009

SARS Customs ends a strong week with R57 million narcotics bust at ORTIA

Pretoria 17 July 2009 – Customs officials from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) Border Control Unit today made a major breakthrough in the fight against drug trafficking when they seized a large quantity of chemicals that are used in the manufacturing of narcotic substances.

The substances seized included chemicals used as a precursor in the manufacture of narcotics such as Ecstasy and Crystal Meth (Tik).

At this stage the estimated street value of the chemicals is about R57 million. The chemicals were transported into South Africa on flights from India and Dubai to OR Tambo International Airport as cargo shipments. It is believed that the cargo was in transit and destined for Brazil and Columbia.

In total Customs officials confiscated 9 drums containing 210 kg of chemical powders.

Today's seizures follow on similar successes by Border Control officials earlier this week.

On Monday Customs officials seized a bag containing 5kg of cocaine at ORTIA which was destined for Maputo. On the same day a South American national was arrested after 1kg of cocaine was found in her bag. The female passenger was accompanied by a 1 year old baby.

On Thursday two South African women were detained after it was established that they had swallowed bullets of cocaine. The two suspects are in detention.

These incidents demonstrate the need for SARS Customs to continually strengthen its border control capabilities and work with other law enforcement agencies like the South African Police Service (SAPS) to combat the illicit trafficking of narcotics and other illegal goods.

ENDS