

Media Releases 2011

56 shipping containers detained in SARS crackdown

Pretoria, 4 April 2011 – Customs officers from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) have detained 56 shipping containers, containing clothing suspected of being illegal imports, at the China Shopping Centre, south of Johannesburg.

During the same operation on Thursday last week, Immigration officials from the Department of Home Affairs seized computers and hard disks suspected of being used in the production of false Identity Documents and passports. Twelve people were arrested for alleged immigration offences.

SARS customs officials also removed equipment suspected of being used in the production of counterfeit CD's and DVD's.

The goods in the shipping containers as well as other goods seized are valued at an estimated R10-million. Shipping files were seized from various clearing agents suspected of being involved in the irregular importation of clothing and textiles.

The joint operation involved 100 government officials, including SARS tax officials, the South African Police Service, the Department of Labour, Department of Health, Department of Trade and Industry and the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC) as well as the Johannesburg metropolitan police.

As a result of government's concern about the illicit economy and its impact on the local clothing and textile industry in particular, SARS was mandated to initiate an intergovernmental response to deal with the illegal importation of clothing and textiles.

One of the biggest threats however remains the under-invoicing of import clothing and textile consignments resulting in low revenue flows into the fiscus. Coupled with this is the significant loss of jobs in the local clothing and textile industries over the past years.

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