

Police seize unregistered medicines at OR Tambo International Airport

The South African Police Service (SAPS) this week seized unregistered medicines worth a market value of R126 million at the OR Tambo International Airport.



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The unregistered medicines which are believed to be Ivermectin were mainly found to be in tablet form.

The discovery of the tablets was made by authorities during an inspection of a cargo container that was destined to South Africa from India.

Upon a compliance verification of the unregistered medicines by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), authorities found that the company that had imported the medicines into the country, had done so without the necessary written approval and authorisation from the Regulatory Authority.

While no arrests have been made as yet, the SAPS through its Interpol office are working with authorities from India to establish the exact delivery address of the consignment in the country.

The latest confiscation of the unregistered medicines is the largest bust concerning the illegal importation of medicines since the beginning of the year.

In January 2021, a multidisciplinary team arrested a total of seven people for the illegal importation of unregistered medicines mostly found to be Ivermectin.

One person was arrested at the King Shaka International Airport while six others were arrested at OR Tambo International Airport.

All seven accused have already appeared before court and are currently out on bail.

In all the cases, preliminary investigations revealed that the unregistered medicines had been imported for sale purposes and would have been utilized in the treatment of the Covid-19 virus.

“The SAPS therefore draws the attention of pharmaceutical companies, including health experts to section 22(c) of the Medicines Act which clearly states that, anyone who wishes to import medicines into the country must have written authority from SAHPRA.

“It should be further noted that those who do not comply with the Act will be apprehended and brought before a court of law to answer to illegal dealing and/or importation of unregistered medicines,” SAPS said in a statement.

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