



## **AGRI-FOOD & VETERINARY AUTHORITY AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS**

### **JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

1 September 2017

### **Illegal rhino horns seized**

The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) seized eight cut pieces of illegal rhino horns transiting through Changi Airport on 31 August 2017. A 29-year-old Vietnamese man is assisting AVA with investigations.

On 31 August 2017, acting on a tip-off about an attempt to smuggle illegal wildlife products through Singapore, AVA collaborated with Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority to investigate. A 29-year-old male Vietnamese transit passenger who was flying from Dubai to Laos via Changi Airport was stopped. His luggage was inspected and eight pieces of cut rhino horns, concealed as gifts, were detected and seized.



Illegal rhino horns detected and seized on 31 August 2017 (Photo: AVA).

In Singapore, it is an offence to illegally import and export/re-export, transit, possess, sell, offer/advertise for sale or display to public any illegal wildlife species (including their parts and derivatives) protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna or Flora (CITES). Offenders shall be liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$500,000 and/or 2 years' imprisonment, and to the forfeiture of the contraband.

The Singapore government adopts a zero tolerance stance on the use of Singapore as a conduit to smuggle endangered species and their parts and derivatives. AVA will take stern enforcement actions against any illegal wildlife smugglers. In 2014, a man was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment for smuggling eight pieces of rhino horns while in transit through Singapore.

While AVA continues to work with border control and partner enforcement agencies to maintain vigilance, tackling illegal wildlife trade requires concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including the public. Demand is the impetus for poachers of endangered animals. The public can help reduce demand by not buying wildlife parts and products. The public can also alert AVA of any suspected cases of illegal wildlife trade, and provide information (e.g. suspected person or company involved, type of products alleged to be smuggled, advertised or offered for sale, etc). Members of the public can share such information with AVA via our online feedback form or call us at 6805 2992. All information shared with AVA will be kept strictly confidential.

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