

Tanzanian ship seized over suspicious cargo

By Simon Masaba

Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) in Kampala have impounded a Tanzanian ship used to ferry suspected smuggled goods worth over \$29,830 (about sh106m) into Uganda.

The ship, impounded at Port Bell in Luzira, Kampala on Monday, was carrying 34 bales of fish nets, fish hooks and 1,228 cartons of spaghetti meant for the Tanzanian market.

The URA intelligence-led operation also uncovered 283 cartons of sweets aboard Port Bell MV Vero II, along with 580 cartons of Malt juice and six pieces of boat engines.

While addressing a press conference yesterday at the URA headquarters in Nakawa, Kampala, the URA publicist, Vincent Seruma, said the products will be destroyed in accordance with the law.

Without revealing the identity of the importers Seruma said URA had the clues and that they were closing in on the racket linked to the scam.

"It has been a success on impounding

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such goods because of the good intelligence network gathered across the country on smuggled goods," he said.

During the press conference, the assistant commissioner in charge of enforcement, Agnes Nabwire said: "With the SCT, we hope to deploy in Tanzania. This will enable us to manage the risk of smuggled goods through Tanzania."

Port Bell MV VERO II, according to URA, docks at Port Bell every three months, with an assortment of cargo from Mwanza.

URA impounds fuel truck

In a separate case, URA on Tuesday impounded a fuel truck carrying 35,000 litres of alcoholic drinks (neutral spirits) worth over \$25,915 (about sh92m).

Security operatives intercepted a truck registration number T88DBY/T510DAJ

at Kawempe, a Kampala suburb, where a checkpoint had been set up, following a tip-off. Driven by one Ingi Mayyo, the truck which was heading to Kampala, was impounded and escorted to URA's Nakawa office.

According to URA, the driver did not possess any customs documents pertaining to the merchandise

Customs officer arrested

In another operation, URA intelligence officers on Tuesday arrested a customs officer at the Uganda-Kenya border in Busia, accused of falsifying documents to aid clearance of goods.

Andrew Orono is alleged to have falsified documents of both URA and its counterpart agency in Kenya, to clear goods destined for a grocery store in Busia.

Security operatives recovered documents, including bank receipts and stamps of the revenue agencies of the Kenya Bureau of Standards and Diamond Trust Bank.

In light of the customs breach, the Ugandan and Kenyan revenue agencies have resolved to step up controls and checks at the busy border points.

Chinese firm robbed

On Wednesday last week, a group of fraudsters posing as employees of Tyre Express, a private company in Kampala, conned a Chinese firm.

According to URA, the conmen would order goods on credit, under the name of the company, and after a long battle with the supplier to get them to pay, their luck ran out.

The fraudsters had reportedly ordered a new consignment of 1,550 car tyres. A truck registration number T906BLB carrying the tyres from Dar es-Salaam (Tanzania) was intercepted at Mutukula border and escorted to Nakawa.