

my land. I was first approached by the wife of the Chinese,

and some other employees of Chang, waylaid him and

Catherine Bamugemereire

the bills.

URA seizes 100 cars with fake number plates

By Andrew Ssenyonga

Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) has impounded 101 vehicles with fake registration and expired foreign number plates and documents in a three-month operation around Kampala.

According to Vincent Seruma, the assistant commissioner public and corporate affairs at URA, the enforcement team working jointly with traffic Police traversed the city to impound the cars.

During a press conference at URA headquarters in Nakawa yesterday, Seruma said: "This operation came after we saw a number of vehicles with foreign registration plates flooding the roads."

These impounded vehicles include brands like Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Range Rover, and Toyota Prado. They mainly carry registration plates of South Africa, South Sudan, the US and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Seruma said 51 of the impounded cars were holding diplomatic registration plates whose tax exemption licences had expired.



Some of the impounded cars parked in Nakawa. Photo by Nancy Nanyonga

"Many cars were being driven illegally because owners had acquired diplomatic tax exemption licences which expired after the original owners sold them," he said.

He added that the current owners must report to the tax authority, verify and process fresh documents if they want to use the cars again.

"We encourage Ugandans to embrace tax compliance to avoid inconveniences," he advised. Seruma said so far, five of the seized luxury cars have paid up their penalties.

"The owners have fully paid up their taxes and fines. The authority has collected revenue of up to sh159m," he added.

Abel Kagumire, the manager

of enforcement operations at the customs department, said 18 of the seized vehicles were found without documents.

"Some of the vehicles are feared to have been smuggled because at the time of seizure, they had no documents and the owners have been arrested to explain how they got the cars," he explained.

Another fraudster imported a consignment of NPK fertilizers valued at sh694m from Van Iperen International BV Netherlands. The Netherlands Embassy Complained to URA to assist and recover the goods. URA is still searching for suspects.

FRAUD TACTICS

Kagumire also clarified that other vehicles were impounded because their foreign owners had overstayed their visitation.

"Many foreign nationals fail to go back home after their visitation period expires. They continue driving the vehicle without renewing their documents," he said.

New online fraud

Meanwhile, the authority has impounded over 30 containers of goods which could attract a tax of sh810m.

Seruma said the goods were ordered under false pretence by a number of Ugandan individuals in a new cycle scam.

"Ugandans have been ordering goods from foreign companies using fake emails that resemble those of genuine companies and when the goods are delivered the people who ordered disappear and their emails are disconnected," he added.

He noted that many companies from China, India and Holland have complained to the authority of the unscrupulous Ugandans who dupe them into sending goods that are not paid for in the end.

One of the fraudsters is said to have used a fake name and imported four containers of rice valued at sh206m from Chayan Exporters India without paying the exporter.

The fraudster allegedly falsified documents to obtain goods from Mombasa and kept them in a warehouse in Mukono.

The supplier, DM Yana, came to Uganda and reported to the commissioner customs to recover his goods.