

Office of the National Director of Public Prosecutions



The National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa
Igunya Jikelele Labetshutshisi boMzantsi Afrika
Die Nasionale Vervolgingsgesag van Suid-Afrika

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 03 APRIL 2009

RE: CYRILDENE COUNTERFEITING HOUSE FORFEITED TO THE STATE

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On Tuesday, 31 March 2009 the Johannesburg office of the Asset Forfeiture Unit (AFU), with the assistance of the South African Police Service (SAPS), obtained a forfeiture order in respect of a house in Cyrildene, Johannesburg. The house was used to manufacture and copy DVDs and CDs in a large counterfeiting operation. The property was significantly adapted to conduct the operation. Police responded to a complaint by a group of popular local musicians, on 3 April 2007, that counterfeit copies of their CDs, DVDs and cassettes were illegally manufactured on the property. Members of the SAPS investigated and found thousands of counterfeit CDs, DVDs and cassettes in and around the house, as well as a vast number of computers, printers, DVD, CD and cassette writers. A thorough search of the house revealed deliberately concealed trap doors that led to the ceiling area and a recently constructed basement.

The owner of the house, R Chen, claimed that she was an innocent owner who had leased her property and was unaware of the criminal activities taking place on the property. The court rejected her version and held that it was improbable for her not to have suspected that illegal activities were conducted on her premises. The judge commented that ordinary law enforcement efforts were insufficient to deal with certain crimes and there was a need for stronger measures, such as asset forfeiture, to supplement these measures. He stated that steps were necessary to combat these types of crimes.

The thousands of CDs, DVDs and cassettes that were seized at the house have an estimated value of R1.1 million, according to the Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA). According to experts from RISA, such cases result in the loss of millions of Rands to the recording and film industry, local artists and ultimately impacts negatively on our economy at large, as there is a threat to international investment.



Justice in our society, so that people can live in freedom and security

Manufacturing and trading in counterfeit goods has, in the past, been linked to organised crime syndicates who use the funds derived from these activities to further other particularly serious crimes on an organised scale.

A clear message is that property used to commit crime will be forfeited and that owners must exercise vigilance in order to prevent the use of their property in criminal activities. South African law enforcement agencies are making inroads in combating acts of counterfeiting. With the impending FIFA world cup, criminal syndicates will employ various measures to criminally enrich themselves through trading in counterfeit products – they will find our agencies operating with heightened alertness where counterfeiting will not be tolerated.

Enquiries: **NPA Spokesperson**

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