

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 30 JUNE 2010

RE: VIETNAMESE CITIZEN GETS 10 YEARS FOR RHINO HORN SMUGGLING

On Wednesday 30 June 2010, Xuan Tuan Hoang, a Vietnamese citizen, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment after being convicted of fraud relating to smuggling of Rhino horns by the Kempton Park Regional Court. The accused, who has no fixed ties to South Africa, entered the country on the 13 March 2010 on a visitor's Visa which was issued in Hanoi, Vietnam. The court ordered that the seven horns whose estimated value is R885000.00 be confiscated to the state for disposal by Nature Conservation.

He was arrested at OR Tambo International Airport after suspicious items were detected by scanners in the luggage of the accused. Seven (7) Rhino horns were found in his suitcase for which he failed to produce any CITES permit regarding possession and export thereof. The accused first appeared in court on 31 March 2010.

The sentence will ensure that those involved in illegal Rhino horn smuggling are dealt with effectively and sends out a strong warning to all persons considering indulging in such activity. Rhinoceros are a rare species and consequently require the protection as contemplated in the environmental legislation. The illegal hunting of Rhinos is a serious and growing threat. According to our information, in 2009, 122 rhinos were killed and dehorned in the National Parks across the country. In the first

two weeks of 2010, seven rhinos were killed in the North West Province and seven in the Kruger National Park. The actions of the accused threaten and undermine the government's efforts to preserve our environment. The primary motivation for criminals to hunt rhinos is clearly financial enrichment.

Issued by:

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