

Turning learning into action

Using IIPCIC as a tool in fighting transnational organized IP crime:

A case study of Windhoek, Namibia

by Detective Chief Inspector R. Sandema, Head of Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Forfeiture Sub-Division, Namibia Police Force.

‘Were you able to use something you learned from IIPCIC to achieve a concrete, positive result?’

THURSDAY JUNE 13 2013 NEWS Sun 3

N\$12m fake goods seized

According to police information, 6 277 baby products valued at N\$1,2 million, 11 385 cosmetic items valued at N\$6,2 million and 14 000 pirated, branded goods valued at N\$5,6 million were confiscated.

OSHAKATI MERJA ILEKA

The Oshana police confiscated over N\$12 million in counterfeit goods from Chinese-owned shops in the region during a two-day operation last week.

During the crackdown, 38 stores - mainly at Oshakati and Oshikuku - had large boxes of goods containing baby products, clothes and cosmetics removed from their premises.

The operation, which kicked off last week Thursday, was co-ordinated with members of Interpol and customs officials.

A 37-year-old Chinese national, Yuanfeng Li, was also arrested during the clampdown after she tried to bribe a police officer who entered her shop with N\$570.

She appeared in the Oshakati Magistrate's Court on Friday on a bribery charge and was granted bail of N\$6 000.

During a press conference at the Oshana police headquarters yesterday, Oshana police chief, Commissioner Ndahangwapo Kashihakumwa, said more arrests are expected in the coming weeks.

"There are cases still to be opened against the Chinese for fraud and contravention of the Trademark Act 48 of 1973," said Kashihakumwa.

During the operation, the Oshana police also swooped down on the Oshakati Open market, better known as Omatala, and confiscated 1 630 fake cigarettes valued at N\$6 540.

The police are now waiting for advice from the court on how best to dispose of items seized during the operation.

Kashihakumwa is expected to hold a meeting today with Chinese shop owners operating in the region to straighten out some of the issues regarding the sale of fake products.

"We will also address the issue of the Chinese not banking.

To us law enforcement agents, we see the refusal of the Chinese banking as a contribution to criminal activities, because if they banked, they would not be targets," said Kashihakumwa.

Kashihakumwa added that although the Chinese are notorious for selling fake products in their shops, the police decided to conduct its first operation for this year against fake products following numerous complaints from the public.

"The people are crying. The selling of fake products is on the increase and it seems we are not applying a handbrake," explained Kashihakumwa.



FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT: Commissioner Ndahangwapo Kashihakumwa is pictured with a consignment of confiscated goods from Chinese shops, filling two large rooms at Oshakati Police Station. PHOTO: MERJA ILEKA

Operation ETOSHA - targeting illicit trade

Namibia shares borders with Angola to the north, Zambia to the north east, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south and the vast Atlantic Ocean to the west. The significance of Namibia's geographical position is that illicit goods have many countries and channels by which to reach the Namibian market.

In June 2013, the Namibian Police Force organized a preparatory workshop in Windhoek, Namibia, which focused on the strategies to be employed in the upcoming Operation ETOSHA – an INTERPOL-coordinated operation targeting illicit trade. During the workshop, Detective Chief Inspector Sandema shared knowledge gained from the International IP Crime Investigators College (IPCIC) course with stakeholders from Police, Customs, the Judiciary, IP-concerned groups and brand representatives.

As a result of Operation ETOSHA, N\$ 12 million worth of fake goods were seized and a number of individuals arrested. The success was widely reported in Namibian and international media:

“Operation Etosha in Namibia resulted in the seizure of 200,000 illicit or counterfeit items including clothing, perfume, alcohol,

cigarettes, mobile telephones and toys worth more than USD 4 million, and some 90 individuals including 31 illegal immigrants were arrested.

A machine used to erase and change the expiration date on food containers, which could lead unsuspecting members of the public to unknowingly consume potentially dangerous products, was also recovered.”

INTERPOL Media Release, 18th July 2013, <http://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News/2013/PR085>.

As well as raising awareness amongst the public of the consequences involved in the trading of illicit goods, Operation ETOSHA highlighted the links between illicit trade and other types of criminality:

“An investigation into suspected money laundering was opened following the seizure of more than USD 300,000 in cash, in addition to a second investigation into a case of corruption and bribery.”

INTERPOL Media Release, 18th July 2013, <http://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News/2013/PR085>.

Following a similar series of raids by the Namibian Police Force, a number of shopping outlets found to be selling counterfeit goods were closed. Namibian Police also seized containers of oil that had been smuggled from the Angolan towns of Ondijiva and Santa Clara into Namibia.

Detective Chief Inspector Sandema accredited the success of Operation ETOSHA to prior training, strategic planning and teamwork.

In addition, Detective Chief Inspector Sandema recognized that the knowledge gained from the International IP Crime Investigators College (IIPCIC) modules helped shape the general attitudes towards the policing of counterfeiting and piracy.