



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Singapore authorities seize one tonne of illegal ivory worth S\$2m

3 April 2014

Acting on a tip-off, officers from the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) and Singapore Customs worked together to intercept and detain a shipment of illegal ivory, estimated to be worth S\$2 million, last week.

2 This is the third largest seizure of illegal ivory by Singapore authorities since 2002 (refer to Annex A for information on the previous cases).

3 The shipment, which was declared as coffee berries, was transiting through Singapore from Africa in a 20-foot container and destined for another Asian country. AVA and Singapore Customs officers detected irregularities in the consignment of goods when the container was scanned at the Pasir Panjang Export Inspection Station on 25 March 2014.



AVA and Singapore Customs officers recovered 106 pieces of ivory from 15 wooden crates in the container.

4 A total of 106 pieces of illegal raw ivory tusks, weighing about one tonne, were recovered from 15 wooden crates. AVA is currently investigating the case.



The estimated value of the illegal ivory seized is S\$2 million.

5 All elephants are endangered species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). International trade in elephant ivory has been prohibited under the Convention since 1989. Under the Singapore Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, a permit is required to import and export/re-export any elephant and its parts and products including ivory. The penalties for illegal trade in ivory is a maximum fine of S\$50,000 per scheduled specimen (not exceeding an aggregate of S\$500,000) and/or imprisonment of up to two years. The same penalties apply to any transshipment of ivory through Singapore without proper CITES permits from the exporting/importing country.

6 AVA will continue to cooperate and collaborate with Singapore Customs and other national and international enforcement agencies to curb wildlife trafficking. AVA would like to remind all companies including shipping and logistics companies, declaring agents and freight forwarders to exercise prudence when accepting jobs from customers or companies, and adopt internal security measures to avoid being implicated in the smuggling of illegal wildlife, their parts and products.

7 Anyone with information on illegal trade in ivory can contact the AVA on 63257625. All information provided to the AVA will be kept in strict confidence.

Jointly issued by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore and Singapore Customs

Annex A

Background information on previous cases

1	<p>In June 2002, AVA seized a shipment of about six tonnes of raw ivory tusks and cut ivory pieces transiting through Singapore from Africa. The shipment of 532 raw ivory tusks and 40,810 ivory pieces were packed in six wooden crates labelled as "marble sculptures" and was estimated to be worth about S\$1.5 million. Following AVA's investigations, a local shipper was prosecuted and fined S\$5,000, which was the maximum fine under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act then, for preparing the documents which facilitated the shipment. The illegal ivory was repatriated to Africa for further investigations.</p>
2	<p>In January 2013, AVA and Singapore Customs intercepted a shipment of about 1.8 tonnes of illegal raw ivory tusks transiting through Singapore from Africa. The shipment of 1099 pieces of raw ivory tusks were packed in 65 gunny sacks and estimated to be worth S\$2.5 million. AVA's investigations concluded that no local importer was involved in the case. The illegal ivory was repatriated to Africa for further investigations.</p>