

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **King Shaka International Airport welcomes seven dogs as first K9 Unit is launched**

**Durban, 4 November 2019** – King Shaka International Airport and the South African Police Services Border Policing launched a K9 Unit comprising of seven K9 handlers and dogs of which, two are German Shepards, three Labradors, two Belgian Shepards at the airport.

The dogs and handlers come in to strengthen border policing operations with specific training to detect; narcotics (four dogs), explosives (two dogs) and protected species in the detention of rhino horn, crayfish, ivory wet and dry abalone.

Welcoming the seven canines King Shaka International Airport General Manager Terence Delomoney said, “We are delighted to welcome these highly skilled and specialised dogs to add to the overall safe keeping of our airport and borders. Today, dogs continue to serve vital roles in maintaining airport security from that first screening before boarding to that final check while crossing through customs and border patrol.”

During their daily routine, detection dog handlers and their canines may search cargo shipments, luggage, and passenger carry-on bags. They are most frequently employed at airports, border crossings, and ports of entries.

Brigadier Anthony Gopaul, Section Head of Operational Response Services Border Policing Durban Harbour says, “We want this K9 to grow with the airport, to project its needs and future capacity in alignment with the airport expansion programmes and added flight destinations and routes. SAPS K9 must and will be a capability for the airport, the people that travel through it and the team that is mandated to maintain security standards and specialized capability at KSIA.”

A handler must be familiar with his or her dog's behaviour during searches and if a positive indication is detected. The handlers must write up detailed reports on each case where their dog detects a prohibited substance and seize such exhibits and arrest the perpetrators.

Handlers are also responsible for providing all basic care for their dogs including tasks such as providing food and water, grooming, bathing, and taking the dog out for bathroom breaks and patrols throughout the day. They also participate in regular training exercises to keep the dog sharp and to monitor its effectiveness in detecting planted samples.

Colin Naidoo, Corporate Affairs KSIA commented, "As ACSA we are extremely excited about the K9 Unit at KSIA which will form part of an integrated approach adopted by the security agencies at the airport. The unit will work closely with the current Reshibile Aviation Security canine team and ensure a sense of security and safety for airport users. It must be noted that as these dogs are specifically trained, so they are also very people friendly with the professional guidance of the handler we encourage the public to interact with them when you visit King Shaka International Airport. The dogs will be housed, for the interim, at the SAPS Durban Central Dog Unit and co-locate to KSIA while temporary facilities at KSIA is being prepared with a permanent solution in the pipeline."

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