

MEDIA RELEASE

O.R. TAMBO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT'S SECURITY OPERATIONS YIELD FURTHER ARRESTS AND DISCOVERY OF ILLICIT TOOLS

KEMPTON PARK, 09 January 2020 – Security and stop-and-search operations at O. R. Tambo International Airport continue to yield results with three further people arrested in the week of 31 December 2019 to 6 January 2020, bringing the total number of arrests for the peak holiday season to 33.

Airport spokesperson Samukelo Khambule says that during the week to 6 January, 907 individuals and 101 vehicles on the airside were stopped and searched. A total of 4 400 people and 661 vehicles have now been stopped and searched since the peak season began.

The peak season safety and security operation was boosted with the addition of 14 SAPS constables over and above the 75 SAPS members provided at the start of the holidays.

Khambule says security operations on the terminal or landside part of the airport generated 11 cases of trespassing as part of the drive to identify and remove loiterers from the buildings. Trespassing cases are opened only after those identified as loitering have been warned to move on or to leave the airport.

“Searches on the airside of possible places of concealment led to the separate discoveries of five tools that could be used to open bags. The tools seized include a box cutter, a screwdriver and three items fashioned from pieces of metal,” she said.

Airport rules stipulate that only authorised engineering and maintenance employees may have tools on the airside, and that these tools have to be accounted for.



CAPTION: *Illicit tools seized during searches of a baggage handling area at O. R. Tambo International Airport during the week of 31 December to 6 January.*

Security management has also identified the standard carabiner that can be bought for camping and outdoor use as a tool used to open bags. Carabiners are banned from the airside and cannot be used as key rings or to clip items to a belt.



CAPTION: Staff working airside at O. R. Tambo International Airport are not permitted to have carabiners for any reason.

“Employees found with prohibited items have their airside security permits revoked regardless of whether they were directly linked to criminal activity. These people can no longer work on the airside, but their employment status is a matter for the contractor or service provider concerned,” said Khambule.

On 31 December an employee of a ground handling company was found with a new camera concealed in his clothing during a search at one of the airport’s exit gates for employees and service providers. He was taken to the airport’s SAPS station and arrested.

In another search at an exit gate on 31 December, it was determined that an employee of a different ground handling company was wearing two pairs of trousers. Six cell phones were found concealed in the second pair of trousers. He was arrested.



CAPTION: Six cell phones found during a search at an employee access point at O. R. Tambo International Airport on 31 December 2019.

An employee of a ground handling company was arrested on 6 January after being found in possession of perfume during a stop-and-search operation. Perfume bottles or containers are not permitted on the airside.

Airport security staff at access control points have been paying particular attention to items of clothing because of attempts to conceal items in the lining of jackets and other clothing.

Other security and search processes have been adapted as the peak season has progressed. Employees are searched before and after they commence working on or around a particular aircraft, over and above searches at access control points and potentially being part of stop-and-search operations. Further, all employees working on randomly chosen flights can be subject to integrity testing.

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