

## Beijing raid seizes thousands of suspected ivory products

Beijing police Wednesday seized 3,185 pieces of suspected ivory.

The products – weighing 48.3 kg combined – were on display at seven stalls in the Guanxin Market in Chaoyang District. Ten people have been held for questioning.

Police said their investigation had been going on for some time before Wednesday's raid. The items have all been sent to labs to confirm whether they are made of ivory.

Chinese craftsmen have a long history of carving elephant tusks into elaborate artworks, which are often very expensive.

The government plans a full ban on commercial processing and sale of ivory and products by the end of this year.

Police said the illegal ivory trade has been dropping in recent years. Last year, the amount of smuggled ivory tracked down by the authorities fell as much as 80 percent from previous peak years.

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## There is great untapped potential here for exports and growth – Gardiner

**Barry Gardiner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade**, responding to today's announcement of a partnership between UKEF and high street banks, **said**:

"Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of our economy, but have been neglected for too long. Lack of adequate export finance continues to be a big barrier to trade for British SMEs, which make up to 60 percent of private sector jobs, but currently only one in five exports. There is great untapped potential here for exports and growth.

"Labour has repeatedly called for more to be done to support and ensure that UK Export Finance (UKEF) is broadened away from arms and big ticket items exclusively, and in our General Election manifesto we committed to championing SME export

interests.

“Today’s announcement from the government is a welcome agreement with us. However, export finance underwritten by British taxpayers should be subject to the most stringent scrutiny, risk assessment and ethical controls. Banks should not be allowed to pass ordinary lending risks to the taxpayer, nor should they be able to undertake undue risk under this scheme.

“This initiative should be used to support the growth in strategic sectors for the future of the UK economy. It should work in tandem with our industrial strategy so that taxpayer subsidised export credit does not put British industries and British jobs at risk.”

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## [The public has a right to know if any governments, foreign or domestic organisations or individuals are funding extremism in this country – Diane Abbott](#)

**Diane Abbott MP, Labour’s Shadow Home Secretary**, responding to the Government’s decision to not publish the extremism funding report in full, said:

“The public has a right to know if any governments, foreign or domestic organisations or individuals are funding extremism in this country, and what the UK government intends to do to prevent that.

“Of course, security intelligence should not be compromised but this is easily achieved by redaction and other means. The Government would never have commissioned this report if it considered this problem insurmountable.

“Instead, there is a strong suspicion this report is being suppressed to protect this Government’s trade and diplomatic priorities, including in relation to Saudi Arabia. The only way to allay those suspicions is to publish the report in full.”

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## [30,538 investigated for duty crimes in 1st half of 2017](#)

A total of 30,538 Chinese officials were investigated for work-related crimes in the first half of 2017, according to a seminar for chief procurators on Wednesday.

The number came from 29 provinces, with Beijing, Shanxi and Zhejiang, the pilot provinces and regions for the reform of the monitoring system excluded, marking a 19.6-percent year-on-year increase from last year.

Of the total, 1,505 of the investigated were on county level, while another 224 were on bureau level for committing duty crimes including bribery and misconduct.

Up to 1,650 officials among those investigated were related to duty crimes in poverty alleviation work, up 81.7 percent on a yearly basis, as a result of the stronger hand against the crimes in poverty relief over the past six months.

Also, 495 were investigated and punished for work-related crimes that led to accidents with serious consequences.

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## [There is clear and strong cross-party concern about leaving Euratom – Paul Blomfield](#)

**Paul**

**Blomfield MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Brexit**, speaking after a Westminster Hall debate today on the UK's future membership of Euratom, said:

"This is yet another important debate that the Brexit department has dodged, instead sending a Business Minister who was unable to provide any answers.

"The former Chancellor has indicated that David Davis and Greg Clark were overruled

on continuing membership of Euratom by the Prime Minister. Reports from David Davis' former chief of staff suggested that this was because of the Prime Minister's absolutist and obsessional stance on the ECJ.

"There is clear and strong cross-party concern about leaving Euratom. It is time for David Davis to clarify if he is content to allow the Prime Minister's reckless red line, threatening jobs and cancer treatments, to stand."