

# Travellers jailed for smuggling rhino horns

Two travellers who smuggled rhino horns and were convicted for violating the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586) were sentenced to imprisonment for 26 months at the District Court today (April 8).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that the two men arrived in Hong Kong on February 14, 2019, from Johannesburg, South Africa. About 40 kilograms of rhino horns were seized from their two check-in carton boxes by Customs officers.

Subsequent to follow-up investigation, the AFCD charged the two men with illegal import of specimens of species listed in Appendix I to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). They were convicted at the District Court today. With 39 months' imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing, the defendants were sentenced to 26 months behind bars after a one-third reduction as they pleaded guilty. It is the highest penalty handed out under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance for illegal import of endangered species so far.

Rhinos are listed in Appendix I to the CITES and regulated under the Ordinance in Hong Kong. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction. Members of the public are urged not to break the law.

To enquire about the control of endangered species or to report suspected irregularities, the public can call the AFCD on 1823 or visit the website [www.cites.hk](http://www.cites.hk).