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News: Operation Crassula nets successes worth millions

2021/05/28

Media Statement
South African Police Service
Office of the Provincial Commissioner Northern Cape

KIMBERLEY - A two yearlong clandestine operation dubbed- Operation Crassula was successfully terminated during the early hours of 28 May 2021 in the Namakwa area and the Western Cape.

The undercover operation was initiated in May 2019 during which agents engaged in negotiations and transactions amounting to millions of rands were conducted between agents and buyers of the protected plant species.

Crassula is a diverse and extensive genus of succulent plants commonly known as Jade plant or Pink Joy.

The operation was executed simultaneously by collective teams under the operational of Colonel Wilmo Vermeulen from Provincial Organise Crime comprising of Provincial SAPS components, units, the Namakwa district office and units and stations within the district as well as support from ZF Mgcawu units.

The teams raided 10 premises simultaneously of suspects believed to be involved in the illegal trade of succulents in the Namakwa area.

Ten (10) males between the ages 25 and 50 years were arrested at various locations in Garies, Spoeigrivier, Paulshoek and Bitterfontein and the eleventh suspect is currently in custody.

The Acting Provincial Commissioner, Major General Johan Bean applauded the collective action by the various units and components for the excellent successes achieved and thanked the investigative team for their meticulous investigation and planning over the last 2 years which delivered remarkable successes and seizures including Eriosperum plants valued at R50 000-00, dagga with an estimated street value of R5880-00 and 18 cellphones valued at R32 000-00 over this period.

He also stated that the protection of our endangered fauna and flora is of utmost importance to the province.

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