



NEWS RELEASE

LRA/PR-028/18-19

LRA Seizes Smuggled Gold

(Monrovia, February 5, 2019): The Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) has seized a huge quantity of gold being smuggled out of Liberia by a Lebanese national identified as Hassan Aidibi.

Mr. Aidibe was arrested during the early morning of Monday, February 4, 2019 at the Roberts International Airport while attempting to board a Royal Air Maroc flight with a briefcase containing the gold.

Addressing a news conference in Paynesville, LRA Deputy Commissioner General for Technical Affairs Decontee T. King-Sackie said LRA Customs officers through a very robust security measure discovered that Mr. Aidibi was exporting 56- kilograms of gold instead of the 97.94 ounces he earlier declared.

“The exporter processed a Customs Declaration at the Ministry of Mines & Energy for 97.94 ounces of gold at a current market value of US\$95,876 and made a 3% royalty payment of US\$2,876 into the General Revenue Account,” she reported.

She said the actual gold being exported by Mr. Hassan Aidibi was 56 kilograms or over 1,900 ounces valued at over US\$2million.

According to Madam King-Scakie, the royalty on the gold under seizure is estimated at over US\$50K.

“ The taxes evaded by multiple businesses under this scheme is estimated at over US\$200K monthly – an amount sufficient to service the payroll for at least 1,000 police officers or healthcare workers across the country,” she noted.



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The LRA Deputy Commissioner General for Technical Affairs disclosed that preliminary analysis by LRA Anti-smuggling investigation team suggests that such scheme can only be successfully executed with the involvement and assistance of individuals from multiple border agencies and the airlines.

“The current discovery is believed to be one of many transactions involving multiple foreign and Liberian-owned businesses,” Deputy Commissioner General King-Sackie said.

She reported that preliminary documents retrieved so far indicates that Mr. Hassan Aidibe was transporting the gold on behalf of Gold Business Center, a business duly registered under the laws of Liberia and licensed by the Ministry of Mines & Energy on January 24, 2017 and up to June 26, 2019.

Meanwhile, investigation by Anti-smuggling officers to determine the full extent of the scheme so as to inform further actions for new border controls is ongoing.

The confiscated consignment of gold has been transferred to the relevant government agency for custody pending full investigation and enforcement of the relevant tax laws.