

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has uncovered a major international drug trafficking network operating across Africa, Europe and Asia, intercepting illicit consignments worth more than N6.2 billion in Lagos and arresting a suspected cross-border kingpin alongside other traffickers.

The agency said the seizures demonstrate the increasingly sophisticated methods being adopted by drug syndicates to smuggle narcotics into Nigeria. One of the major discoveries was 47,200 tablets of captagon, popularly known as the “Jihadi drug,” concealed inside ordinary blocks of bathing soap imported from Ghana.

The consignment, valued at more than N1.5 billion, was intercepted at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos, following the arrest of 49-year-old Akinbile Kazeem Aikins, who arrived in Nigeria from Accra aboard an African World Airlines flight.

The captagon seizure was, however, only part of the larger haul recovered at the airport. NDLEA operatives also intercepted 3,900,030 tablets of Tramadol 225mg and Tapentadol 250mg, weighing 2,787.40 kilogrammes in total and estimated to be worth more than N4.6 billion on the street.

The drugs were recovered from four abandoned consignments at the airport. NDLEA spokesperson, Femi Babafemi, disclosed this in a statement on Sunday, saying three of the consignments contained 900,000 tablets of Tramadol shipped from Bangladesh through RwandAir. Another consignment contained more than three million tablets of Tapentadol and arrived from Amsterdam aboard Qatar Airways.

Babafemi said the volume and international routes involved indicated a sophisticated transnational trafficking network exploiting Nigeria’s aviation and commercial cargo channels to move pharmaceutical opioids and illicit stimulants into the country.

The operations also extended beyond Lagos, with NDLEA personnel recording significant seizures and arrests across several states. In Rivers State, operatives recovered 316 grammes of cocaine, 10 grammes of heroin and 237 grammes of Colorado from a fireproof iron safe found inside a notorious drug den in Port Harcourt.

In Ondo State, five suspects were arrested in separate operations involving a combined 1,069 kilogrammes of skunk. Delta State also recorded the seizure of



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more than 176,000 assorted opioid pills.

The latest seizures highlight the scale and sophistication of Nigeria's illicit drug trade, as traffickers increasingly rely on international routes and unconventional methods to conceal and transport narcotics. NDLEA Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Brig. Gen. Buba Marwa (rtd.), commended the officers involved in the operations and directed personnel across the country to maintain pressure on drug traffickers.

Marwa also urged operatives to remain vigilant against syndicates using unconventional concealment methods, including everyday household items such as bathing soap.

The seizures, involving millions of opioid tablets as well as captagon, cocaine, heroin and cannabis, underscore the growing international dimension of drug trafficking through Nigeria and the continued challenge facing the country's drug-control authorities.