

Dubai Customs foil a major attempt to smuggle antiquities

27 November 2008

Dubai - Mr. Ahmed Butti Ahmed, Director General of Dubai Customs unveiled the ever major attempt of its kind in the history of the area, to smuggle antiquities.

This was announced at the press conference held on Wednesday 26th November at Dubai Customs main building before a number of media representatives and Arab and international news agencies correspondents.

Mr. Ahmed Butti announced the discovery of an attempt to smuggle 128 pieces of antiquities dated back to different eras of the Middle East history that extending from 3000 BC to the Islamic era, onboard a vessel arriving in Dubai.

The antiquities have been seized during the attempt to smuggle them into the country via Dubai Creek Entry.

The customs inspectors suspected a vessel arriving in Dubai Creek Entry due to suspicious acts of the ship master and crew. The ship master, when questioned about the vessel load answered that it was empty and carrying nothing.

The insistence of the ship master on swift customs clearing procedures for the vessel in question aroused the doubts of the customs inspectors.

A team consisting of 3 inspectors got down the vessel hold where a partition on a specific place in the vessel wall was found while inspecting the vessel precisely.

The ship master declined to remove the partition when asked to do so contending that being a part of the vessel and the vessel might enter the waters and then sink if removed. These have enhanced the inspectors' doubts and insisted on removing the wooden partition.

Upon virtually removing the partition, a great number of antiquities concealed in paper boxes were evident and found to be from the Middle East when initially examined. The ship master and crew immediately denied knowledge of the contrabands.

At the preliminary investigation initiated by customs investigators, a sailor admitted to be the one who stored the boxes without the knowledge of the ship master and other sailors.

The seized antiquities were brought forward to an expert from Dubai Tourism and Commerce Marketing Department who affirmed being antiquities going back to 3000 BC till the Islamic era and deemed to be invaluable antiquities due to their historical, knowledge and scientific significance.

The Antiquities included stony sculptures, pottery and silver vessels, golden and silver coins, worked pieces of gold and silver and jewels dated back to different ears of the Middle East history.

Dubai Customs have detained the seized antiquities in a tightened safe custody until delivered to the competent agencies. Smugglers were arrested as well for further legal actions against them.

Commenting on the incident, Mr. Ahmed Butti said that, "the incident affirms once again the vigilance and preparedness of Customs personnel being efficiently carrying out their duties. We have attached our hopes on the Customs people where proper and consistent rules for developing our employees and training them on latest internationally recognized methods and techniques have been produced. As you may notice our employees prove every day the success of this policy. The practical results being consistently experienced at air, sea or land ports are conclusive evidences for taking the right path and committed to the highest international standards in respect with combating piracy, smuggling and trading in smuggled antiquities in accordance with UAE rules and regulations and the international legitimacy".

Worth mentioning, Dubai Customs made similar successes in the past relative to major seizures, which have already been announced like the diamond seizure, spoiled food and fake medicine and drugs seizures.

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