

OFFICE OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

AVIATION SECURITY REMAIN VIGILANT AMID RISING DRUG SMUGGLING INCIDENTS

The National Airports Corporation Aviation Security (AVSEC) at Port Moresby International Airport remain vigilant and on high alert after intercepting multiple recent attempts to smuggle large quantities of drugs.

On Thursday, 09th April, airport ground handlers noticed two unusual packages arriving from Mt Hagen on Air Niugini flight PX 189 and immediately alerted NAC Aviation Security.

AVSEC then monitored the arrival hall and identified the passenger, traveling under a false identity, who picked up the packages. He was escorted for security re-screening, where 16 kg of marijuana wrapped in two 8kg packages were confirmed.

The suspect was detained and handed over to Airport Police.

This incident follows two earlier security incidents;

- On Sunday, 05th April, AVSEC, working with Air Niugini Security and Police, confiscated 20.2 kilograms of marijuana from a passenger arriving from Tari Airport.
- On the same day, AVSEC officers intercepted undeclared 12 live 9mm rounds of ammunition from another passenger, traveling to Goroka from Port Moresby, who was immediately referred to Police for investigation.

These consecutive detections highlight a disturbing frequency of large quantities of drugs being smuggled through domestic airports. The National Airports Corporation (NAC) recognizes the urgent need to strengthen security screening and access control measures, particularly at outer airports which have emerged as high-risk gateways.

“Our teams together with other airport stakeholders have acted with vigilance and professionalism in stopping recent threats, but the growing number of incidents is deeply concerning. NAC is tightening screening, strengthening access controls, and improving intelligence sharing across all airports. We remain committed to working with partners to protect travellers and ensure airports do not become conduits for criminal activity,” said Dominic Kaumu, Acting Managing Director and CEO of the National Airports Corporation.

NAC commends Air Niugini's ground handling staff who had initially noticed and reported the unusual and suspicious cargo and we again appeal to the public for cooperation and support in reporting suspicious activities throughout our national airports.

Approved for release



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