

OFFICE OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Twenty gold bars seized in smuggling attempt

Twenty gold bars of various sizes and worth millions, which would have been smuggled out of the country, were detected by the National Airports Corporation (NAC) Aviation Security (AVSEC) screeners at the International Terminal on Monday 27th April 2026 and handed over to PNG Customs.

Three separate suitcases belonging to three different passengers bound for Hong Kong, were identified by AVSEC as containing suspicious items during baggage screening.

After detection, AVSEC liaised with Air Niugini and PNG Customs where one of the passengers, was identified. He was then asked to open his suitcase, upon which two gold bars were confirmed in his luggage. The passenger was unable to produce valid documentation authorizing the export of the gold and was handed over to PNG Customs.

The other two passengers didn't show up and failed to board the aircraft, therefore their suitcases which were still locked, were handed over to PNG Customs.

On Tuesday, 28th April, PNG Customs notified NAC AVSEC that the passengers didn't show up to claim the two suitcases, their luggage were then opened in the presence of Customs officers.

It was confirmed that one of the suitcases contained 12 gold bars while the other contained 6 gold bars. In total, 20 gold bars were seized from the three suitcases and handed over to PNG Customs.

Other cases detected since December 2025 included:

Date	Description	Method of concealment
25 th Feb 2026	8 small pieces of smelted gold	In suitcase
30 th Mar 2026	Gold coated in clay, wrapped in 6 plastics wraps	Concealed in specially made bra with pockets
1 st Apr 2026	Gold nuggets	Concealed in capsule
08 th Dec 2025	Gold particles	Concealed in 5 plastic wraps, worn around passenger's pants

NAC Acting Managing Director, Dominic Kaumu praised the AVSEC Officers and encouraged them to continue to be vigilant and do their work diligently and with integrity.

Mr Kaumu also commended PNG Customs for the successful conviction of one of the cases detected on March 30th 2026, where AVSEC detected and referred to PNG Customs, a female passenger traveling to Hongkong who concealed gold in six plastic packs which were hidden in her custom-made sports bra which had pockets.

This incident highlights ongoing challenges in addressing the illegal smuggling of gold through PNG's airports.

NAC reaffirms its commitment to working with all stakeholders to identify and prevent smuggling of gold. We appeal to the public to report any suspicious behaviour.

Approved for release



Dominic Kaumu, ML OBE
Acting Managing Director & CEO
National Airports Corporation



Caption: Two (2) gold bars seized from the first passenger



Caption: Six (6) gold bars seized from the second passenger's suitcase



Caption: Twelve (12) gold bars seized from the third passenger's suitcase



Caption: The three (3) suitcases in which the gold was detected in