

Smuggler linked to President Mnangagwa had 23 gold bars in a case

Written by Administrator
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Jane Flanagan – 11 May 2021

Twenty three gold bars worth £555,000 were discovered in the suitcase of a man who arrived in South Africa without papers on a flight from Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe.

Tashinga Nyasha Masimire, 33, appeared in court in Johannesburg and was bailed for £6,000 after scanners picked up his haul of gold.

Media reports in Zimbabwe identified Masimire as an aide to Henrietta Rushwaya, a relative of President Mnangagwa and head of the Zimbabwe miners' federation who was herself arrested last October for allegedly [smuggling gold](#) .

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Rushwaya was discovered with gold bars weighing 6kg in her handbag as she checked in for a flight from Harare to Dubai.

Masimire will have to report to police in Johannesburg three times a week. He was not asked to enter a plea.

The discovery raises questions about security at Harare's Robert Gabriel Mugabe international airport. According to court documents in the Rushwaya case, airport CCTV cameras were switched off while her 6kg in gold went through scanners. A colleague who was arrested with her claimed that she was acting as a mule on behalf of [Auxillia Mnangagwa](#), the first lady and her son, Collins Mnangagwa.

The scandal exposed an alleged elite trafficking cartel that is estimated to cost the state millions of pounds every month. Rushwaya was released on bail but no date has been set for her trial.

According to Zimbabwe's News Hawks website, Rushwaya confirmed that the arrested man, Masimire, was a former driver. The intended destination of the gold bars was not made public but a picture of Masimire from his Facebook page showed him wearing a red keffiyeh, typically worn in the Gulf.

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A report from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace identified Dubai as a boom country for gold smugglers, where lax policing and deregulation are exploited by corrupt regimes such as Zimbabwe.

Mthuli Ncube, Zimbabwe's finance minister, has estimated that \$100 million of gold leaves its borders illegally each month, often to Dubai, robbing the state of much-needed foreign currency.