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DATE:	1 May 2017
SERIAL:	A-M-01052017
COUNTRIES:	Global

ALERT ---- MARITIME**SUBJECT: Traffickers Covertly Accessing Sealed/Bonded Containers**

DATA: Wildlife traffickers in many ports are able to access sealed and/or bonded maritime shipping containers as a tactic to smuggle illegal wildlife products, as well as other non-wildlife contraband (such as, potentially, hazardous materials).

Modus Operandi:

According to open source and confidential reporting, traffickers tend to access sealed/bonded containers at night, when they add contraband to declared legal goods, or replace these goods entirely with contraband.

Often done with the complicity of employees of the port or external container storage depots, some traffickers also reportedly are capable of opening container seals in a manner that is difficult to detect, and forging or arranging for fraudulent clearing paperwork, such as that which indicates a container has been scanned or cleared when it has not.

Geography:

Covert access to sealed or bonded containers by wildlife traffickers appears to occur more often in source countries of East, West, and Southern Africa, according to Taskforce analysis of available information. However, this tactic has been reported for other types of illicit trafficking in many if not most other countries, and should be considered a global problem.

Red Flags:

Highest risk of this tactic are likely to be at ports and container depots where port authority oversight is weak, and evidence or perception of corruption is higher.

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April 27, 2015 seizure in Bangkok, Thailand of 3,127 kg ivory originating from Mombasa, Kenya. The suspects, arrested in mid-2015 and currently awaiting trial, allegedly concealed the ivory in a shipment of tea after covertly accessing a supposedly sealed shipping container.

Photo: AFP Photo | Pornchai Kittiwongsakul

ACTIONS:

This alert is assessed as most relevant to the general categories of action checked below.

****All decisions and actions informed by this alert are the sole responsibility of the receiving organization****

- Conduct reasonable checks on shipments fitting a similar profile
- Execute / enhance internal controls or procedures relevant to this information
- Report / share information to customs / law enforcement
- Information has potential security implications for company employees

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SOURCE:	This advisory is based on UfW Transport Taskforce analysis of recent enforcement actions as well as open source and confidential reporting from partners. We have <i>high</i> confidence in the reliability and validity of this information.
PRIORITIES:	This alert is related to the following Transport Taskforce information sharing priorities (checked): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildlife trafficker networks, behavior, intentions, and operational tactics and strategy<input type="checkbox"/> Indicators of suspicious or higher risk activity ('red flags') related to wildlife trafficking<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data potentially reportable to or shareable with law enforcement<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Security/physical risks and vulnerabilities to transport company operations, facilities, or staff<input type="checkbox"/> Unintentional facilitation of illegal wildlife demand or retail trade
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CONTACT:	For questions or additional data/analysis relevant to this alert, or to report suspicious shipments or indicators of wildlife trafficking activity, please contact the UfW Transport Taskforce: transport@unitedforwildlife.org

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