

# Sebakwe News

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## Rhino Horn

**Rhino Horn Exports** - In Britain it has been legal to offer for sale rhino horn worked before the 1947 deadline provided it could be classified as a work of art. In recent times the sale of rhino horn at British auction houses has become more frequent with ever increasing prices.



In September 2010 the UK Government announced a ban on the export of rhino horn from the UK. The problem has been the big increase in the sale of antique horn items such as mounted rhino horns and Chinese libation cups which have been turning up at UK auction houses and sold for inflated prices of up to £30,000 for a large 10 kg horn. It is hoped that similar export bans on rhino horn sales will be adopted more widely within the other EU countries. It is thought that some of these items have been brought to the UK and sold here to maximise their value before being re-exported to the Far East where powdered rhino horn is in great demand as a medicine which is sold as a rumoured cure for cancer. There is serious concern that these sales could be helping fuel the global supply and demand for rhino horn and in turn encouraging poachers to kill more wild rhino and so the export ban is a welcome measure to help save the endangered rhino.

In the UK there was an attempt by an antique dealer to illegally smuggle rhino horn from Manchester Airport to mainland China. From DNA samples the horn was traced back to a white rhino that had died at a zoo and a 12 month prison sentence was imposed on the dealer.

## Poisoned Rhino Horn

In August there were headlines in the newspapers that a man in Thailand had died after ingesting poisoned rhino horn which he had purchased in the open market in Bangkok. The source of the contaminated rhino horn has still to be verified but it has been suggested that it may have come from a private game farm in South Africa.

A game farm owner from the North West Province of South Africa has admitted that he has injected poison into the rhino horn of four of his animals - one of these rhino was subsequently slaughtered in July and he was also aware of another five rhino that had been slaughtered and had been contaminated with 'poisoned horn'. These animals could have been the source of the contaminated rhino horn.

However the whole story must be treated with some scepticism until a direct connection can be established between the two different incidents. There is also a concern about the moral and legal issues in deliberately trying to poison another human being who is only the end user and not actually involved in the rhino poaching.