

# Rema, police intensify fight against plastic bags smugglers

By

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The public should support initiatives aimed at curbing smuggling of items that degrade the environment by reporting anyone suspected to be dealing in banned polythene bags, Remy Norbert Duhuze, Director of environment regulation and pollution control at Rema, has said.

Fish vendors still use the banned plastic bags as packaging material. (File)

The public should support initiatives aimed at curbing smuggling of items that degrade the environment by reporting anyone suspected to be dealing in banned polythene bags, Remy Norbert Duhuze, Director of environment regulation and pollution control at Rema, has said.

He note that the public is a key player in the fight against unscrupulous people who smuggle and trade in polythene bags and other items that threaten the environment and people's lives.

The Police in Nyarugenge District recently impounded a vehicle that was found with over 10,400 cartons of the banned plastic bags and 20 rolls of sub-standard electrical cables. The vehicle is believed to have been sneaked into the country through the porous border in Bugesera district.

Duhuze said Rema has intensified monitoring to crackdown on such traders, whom he said buy the polythene bags from neighbouring countries and sneak them into the country through porous borders in Bugesera.

“We have set up inspection teams at the airport and border points, and are also encouraging environmental committees across the country to be alert and report anybody dealing in any materials that degrade the environment,” Duhuze added.

He said though environment committees at the district level educate and sensitise residents on importance of protecting the environment, every Rwandan should be a keen participant in this effort.

“The public should report any smuggling of such materials and any form of environmental pollution to the Police and Rema,” he added.

Inspector of Police Robert Komire, the in charge of environment and disaster at Rwanda National Police, said dealers in the illegal plastic bags take advantage of the unmanned porous border points like Kagitumba, Rusizi and Bugesera. Komire urged the public to always alert the Police about such illegal activities.

In 2008, Rwanda passed a law that banned the importation and use of polythene bags, while possession or smuggling them into the country attracted heavy penalties.

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