

BoMRA AND PARTNER AGENCIES DESTROY 2.8 TONNES OF ILLEGAL AND UNAUTHORISED MEDICINAL PRODUCTS WORTH OVER P500,000

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Gaborone, Botswana: The Botswana Medicines Regulatory Authority (BoMRA), in collaboration with partner law enforcement and public health agencies, has confiscated and overseen the destruction of 2.8 tonnes of illegal and unauthorised medicinal products valued at over P500,000, following coordinated enforcement and market surveillance operations at Martin's Drift Border Gate, Palapye, Mamuno Border Gate, Kasane, Kazungula and Pandamatenga.

These were conducted between 23 and 30 October 2026 and the operations form part of BoMRA's ongoing efforts to strengthen regulatory oversight, disrupt the illegal trade in medicinal products and protect the public from products that do not meet Botswana's regulatory requirements.

The multi-agency operations involved Port Health, Environmental Health, the Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS) and the Botswana Police Service, and targeted trading facilities, street vendors and vehicles, including trucks, public and private transport, to detect the illegal movement and sale of medicinal products.

Products found to be illegal or unauthorised were confiscated and consolidated for destruction, together with products previously intercepted by partner agencies. BoMRA oversaw their handling and disposal to ensure that none could re-enter the medicines supply chain.

More than 20,000 units destroyed included prescription-only medicines, skin-lightening creams, tablets, soaps, oils and codeine-containing cough syrups.

BoMRA reminds the public that medicinal products for human or veterinary use must meet Botswana's regulatory requirements, including product registration and import authorisation, before they can be legally imported, distributed or supplied. Importantly, registration of a medicinal product does not automatically authorise its importation.

Unauthorized products may pose significant risks to consumers because their quality, safety and efficacy may not have been adequately established. Products bought through unverified channels may also be of uncertain origin, or may have been stored and handled under unsuitable conditions.

The Authority therefore urges members of the public to:

- Buy responsibly: Purchase medicinal products only from licensed and authorised facilities.
- Be vigilant: Avoid purchasing medicines from street vendors, informal markets sales and unverified online sellers.
- Use medicines safely: Never use prescription-only medicines, including codeine-containing cough syrups, without a valid prescription from an authorised healthcare professional.
- Seek professional advice: Consult a healthcare professional or veterinarian before using medicinal products or treatments intended for human or animal use.
- Report suspicious products: Notify BoMRA or any nearest police station of any suspected illegal medicinal products.

BoMRA appreciates the continued collaboration of its partner agencies. These partnerships are essential in strengthening surveillance and market control within communities and across the medicines supply chain.

The Authority assures the public that surveillance and enforcement activities will continue, to detect illegal medicinal products, address non-compliance and safeguard public health.

Protecting public health is a shared responsibility. If it's not BoMRA authorised, don't risk it!

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BoMRA MEDICINES REGULATORY AUTHORITY