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Nigerians, Iranians top list of drug suspects

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Customs and police booked 557 suspected foreign traffickers and seized RM350 million worth of drugs from them this year

Nigerians topped the list of 557 foreigners detained for alleged involvement in international drug trafficking this year with RM350 million worth of drugs seized.

A total of 156 Nigerians were arrested followed by 116 Iranians while the rest were from Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Cyprus and other African countries.

The majority of the arrests were by the police while the rest were by the Customs department.

Customs deputy director-general (enforcement) Datuk Matrang Suhaili said a special task force was set up last year and teams were placed at all airports to identify possible drug smugglers.

"We stationed plain-clothed officers skilled at identifying suspicious characters at strategic areas within the airports' vicinity.

"They are trained in character profiling and can detect those with criminal intention," he said, adding that the department worked closely with the police.

He said the team nabbed 48 foreigners this year with the latest case involving Cambodian and Nigerian nationalities detained at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport for bringing in RM4 million worth of drugs here.

The police saw a slight jump in the number of arrest involving foreign drug traffickers this year with 509 people of various nationalities compared with 499 last year.

This year also saw a rise in seizure with RM219.8 million worth of drugs compared with RM137.3 million last year.

The latest was made last week when the Kuala Lumpur narcotics team arrested two Nigerians, aged 27 and 29, and seized RM50,000 worth of drugs in Taman Melati in Wangsa Maju.

One of the suspects was a third year engineering student at a private college in Cheras.