

Rwandan Police arrested sixteen people on Wednesday after carrying out an operation to target narcotics and producers of illicit brew in Rubavu, Nyamasheke and Huye districts.

Police and local leaders seized 2kgs of cannabis and 1,350 litres of assorted illicit drinks from the suspects.

The 2kgs of cannabis were seized from two women identified as Jacqueline Sifa, 34, and Rehema Uwayisenga, 27, in Shwemu Village, Gisa Cell, Rugerero Sector of Rubavu District.

Chief Inspector of Police (CIP) Bonaventure Twizere Karekezi, the Police spokesperson for the Western region, said that Police were tipped off by residents.

“Area residents called Police at about 6pm reporting that two women (Sifa and Uwayisenga) were trafficking narcotics to supply clients in the Rugerero trading center. An operation was swiftly conducted and the duo was arrested red-handed in possession of 2kgs of cannabis,” CIP Karekezi said.

Sifa and Uwayisenga were arrested trafficking 2 Kg of Cannabis to retailers.

Following their arrest, Sifa disclosed that the narcotics belong to her husband whom she only identified as Hubert and that they were sneaked into Rwanda from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The said Hubert was recently released from prison after completing the sentence for the same crime.

About 13 other people were arrested in Muyogoro and Rukira cells of Huye sector, Huye district with 1,030 liters of illicit brew commonly known as Igikwangari.

Another producer of illicit brew called Felicite Mukaremera, 34, was apprehended with 320 liters in Museke Village, Kigoyo Cell, Kanjongo Sector of Nyamasheke District.

The Southern region Police spokesperson, Superintendent of Police (SP) Theobald Kanamugire said that the producers and sellers of illicit brew were identified and reported by residents and local leaders.

The Ministerial order N<sup>o</sup> 001/MoH/2019 of 04/03/2019 establishing the list of

narcotic drugs and their categorization classifies cannabis in “very severe narcotic drugs” while alcoholic drinks produced without complying with standards and other laws; are on the list of “simple narcotic drugs.”

Article 263 of the law determining offences and penalties in general states that; any person who unlawfully produces, transforms, transports, stores, gives to another or who sells narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances commits an offence.

Upon conviction for “very severe narcotics,” the offender faces between 20 years and life imprisonment, and a fine of up to Frw30 million.

In regard to “simple narcotics” the offender faces a term of not less than seven years and not more than ten years and a fine of not less than Frw5 million and less than Frw10 million.