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DATE:	15 August 2017
SERIAL:	A-MAC-15082017
COUNTRIES:	Global

**ALERT ---- MARITIME & AIR (CARGO)**SUBJECT: **Falsified Names on Shipping Documentation**

DATA: Wildlife traffickers regularly use intentionally falsified names on both maritime and air cargo shipping documentation to conceal the true beneficiary, originator, and/or end recipient of illegal shipments of wildlife products.

**Modus Operandi:**

According to open source and confidential reporting, wildlife traffickers regularly falsify name information on bills of lading, air waybills, and other shipping documentation in order to obscure the true origin and destination of illegal wildlife shipments by both air and sea. False names are used for both individual people and companies, typically in the shipper and recipient fields of relevant shipping documentation.

In order to circumvent identification checks and other controls that may otherwise detect false names, use of false names on shipping documentation is reportedly combined with at times, variously: (a) Fake identification documents; (b) Collusion with traffickers of corrupt authorities; and/or (c) Collusion with traffickers of unscrupulous shipping company employees. Traffickers may combine falsified names with real addresses or other accurate declarations on shipping documentation (or vice versa).

In addition to wholly invented fictitious names, the following patterns are evident in the use of false names by wildlife traffickers, according to anecdotal reporting:

- *Generic Names:* Shipper or recipient declared as a generic or highly common name, for example place names (e.g. "John London"), widespread family or given names (e.g. "John Smith", or non-specific names. (e.g. "Import-Export Company, Ltd").
- *Famous Brand Names:* Shipper or recipient declared as identical or similar to a well known company or brand name, sometimes with a location or other addition or revision to the name (e.g. "Famous Brand-West Africa Co. Ltd.")

NOTE: Examples provided above are notional for illustrative purposes and not drawn from real cases.

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Note on Terminology: Falsified names in this context refers only to entirely fictional or faked names of persons or companies, not other forms of misdeclaration of shipper/receiver information – for example use of real businesses set up for the express purpose of facilitating smuggling transactions or complicit individuals who allow their real name information to be used by smugglers to obscure the true beneficiary of an illegal shipment.



*PICTURED: Twenty-six endangered eastern box turtles and 20 African spurred tortoises seized by US authorities in 2013. The trafficker, Kwong Wa Cheung, used a fake name to ship the turtles and was later convicted in US court of related offenses and sentenced to 2 years in federal prison. PHOTO: US Department of Justice*

### **Geography:**

Use of falsified names on documentation associated with illegal wildlife shipments occurs globally.

### **Red Flags:**

Although traffickers regularly modify their tactics to avoid detection, the following indicators (or especially a combination thereof) may indicate a higher risk of falsified names related to wildlife trafficking on shipping documentation and/or warrant enhanced due diligence of related documentation:

- Obviously or unusually generic names of individuals or companies declared on shipping documentation.
- Declared shipper or recipient is a famous or well known company name but with associated anomalies (e.g. misspellings or other errors in the company name; unusual or inaccurate additions or revisions to the brand name; associated with an unusual address or other identifying information; or if an actual client, not shipped via the normal corporate account or process for this company).
- Names of companies for which no public company registration or other record of existence can be found.
- Any of the above found in combination with a shipment along a higher risk routing for wildlife trafficking.

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**ACTIONS:** This alert is assessed as most relevant to the general categories of action checked below.  
\*\*All decisions and actions informed by this alert are the sole responsibility of the receiving organization\*\*

- Conduct reasonable checks on shipments fitting a similar profile
- Execute / enhance internal controls or procedures relevant to this information
- Report / share information to customs / law enforcement
- Information has potential security implications for company employees

**SOURCE:** This advisory is based on UfW Transport Taskforce analysis of recent enforcement actions as well as open source and confidential reporting from partners. We have *high* confidence in the reliability and validity of this information, with the following caveat: the data upon which this analysis is based is exclusively anecdotal and is therefore inherently limited to available information and likely incomplete.

**PRIORITIES:** This alert is related to the following Transport Taskforce information sharing priorities (checked):

- Wildlife trafficker networks, behavior, intentions, and operational tactics and strategy
- Indicators of suspicious or higher risk activity ('red flags') related to wildlife trafficking
- Data potentially reportable to or shareable with law enforcement
- Security/physical risks and vulnerabilities to transport company operations, facilities, or staff
- Unintentional facilitation of illegal wildlife demand or retail trade

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**CONTACT:** For questions or additional data/analysis relevant to this alert, or to report suspicious shipments or indicators of wildlife trafficking activity, please contact the UfW Transport Taskforce:  
[transport@unitedforwildlife.org](mailto:transport@unitedforwildlife.org)

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