

# SARS clamps down on illegal imports

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29 Jun 2010

The South African Revenue Service (SARS) has stepped up its efforts to protect the local clothing industry by introducing measures aimed at regulating clothing imports, mainly from China.

## Job losses

Figures released last week by the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu) claim that 14400 jobs have been lost in SA's textile sector over the past year as a result of counterfeit World Cup apparel, mainly from China.

Union general secretary Andre Kriel said last week that 2000 jobs had been lost in Cape Town. "Soccer supporters and South African citizens can save these jobs and grow the manufacturing capacity by ensuring they buy locally made products," he said.

## World Cup confiscations

SARS executive risk management's Patrick Matlotsi said last week that counterfeit and illegal imports worth millions had so far been confiscated during the World Cup. He said SARS had also increased its risk analysis and intelligence by liaising with other countries to verify imports before they came into SA.

"We now have mutual agreements with countries such as China. The agreement means that we share information, which gives us an idea of each company or individual importing goods from China," Matlotsi said.

The Department of Trade and Industry's chief director for clothing, textile, footwear and leather, Abisha Tembo, said the department had policies and programmes to improve the clothing and textiles industry.

But union economist Etienne Vlok said although there was evidence that SARS and the department were doing much more to protect the industry, more still needed to be done.

*Source: Business Day*