

CRIME & COURTS / 09 Jun '16, 07:23am

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Johannesburg - For years, a Joburg police officer allegedly lived a luxurious lifestyle, residing at a plush house in an upmarket estate and driving several sleek vehicles.

But on Wednesday, his alleged high life appeared to crumble when the police swooped on him for being part of a drug syndicate. He was arrested after allegedly being found with drugs and drug paraphernalia worth about R105 million.

A house in Zakariyya Park, near Lenasia, which was found to have been converted into a fully functioning drug lab that makes Mandrax.

The warrant officer, based at Orlando police station, was arrested at a house in Bassonia in Johannesburg.

The man, who has been a cop for 34 years, led police officers to a house in Zakariyya Park, near Lenasia, which was found to have been converted into a fully functioning drug lab that makes Mandrax.

The 59-year-old cop and four alleged accomplices were nabbed after a joint operation between

the Western Cape and Gauteng Hawks, the Organised Crime Unit, the South African Narcotics Enforcement Bureau and Crime Intelligence, according to Hawks spokeswoman Captain Ndivhuwo Mulamu.

They had received a tip-off about the drug lab early this year.

When police swooped on a De Deur plot in the Vaal, they found that the main house had been converted into a drug lab, while people lived in cottages on the property.

Mulamu said the police found the raw materials used to make Mandrax, including chemicals, a tablet press machine, a crusher machine, stoves, big pots, pipes and a special place for the drugs to dry.

Some of the drugs had already been packaged.

Information gathered from the people at the plot led the police to a luxurious home in Bassonia.

“He led the police to his other house in Zakariyya Park, where they recovered another drug base,” said Mulamu.

“The entire house had been turned into a drug lab and no one lived there. Everything that was found in De Deur was also found in that house.

“Each room in the house had its own designated activity. We also found Mandrax that had already been packaged.”

A source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the same officer was arrested in two separate incidents years ago.

The officer had been found to have been part of a gang that had committed a business robbery and a cash-in-transit heist, according to the source.

It is not clear what happened to those cases.

When asked about the details on the officer, including his arrest, SAPS spokesman Colonel Kay Makhubela referred questions to the Hawks, who are dealing with the latest arrest.

Mulamu said she could not confirm whether the officer had been arrested for the previous crimes.

The source also mentioned that the officer drove a Porsche. While Mulamu confirmed the the Bassonia house was indeed lavish and four luxurious cars were found there, she did not confirm what make they were.

However, she said all the vehicles were 2016 models. She also confirmed that two other vehicles, a truck and a bakkie, were found at the Zakariyya Park house.

This drug operation was the second biggest in 24 hours that the Hawks had shut down, Mulamu said.

They recently got information about a container with drugs worth R50m at Durban Harbour.

“We are still investigating where it came from and where the drugs were headed to,” she said.

The police officer and his four alleged accomplices were expected to appear in the Vereeniging

Cop arrested in drug swoop

Last Updated Saturday, 29 October 2016 20:52

Magistrate's Court on Thursday.

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