

## **Sime Darby's S. African unit investigated for collusion**

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**By Chan Quan Min**

South Africa's competition watchdog raided the local units of global firms Unilever Plc and Sime Darby Bhd as part of a probe into suspected price fixing of edible oils and margarine, Reuters reported.

The Competition Commission said in a statement that it conducted a search and seizure operation at the offices of Unilever South Africa (Pty) Ltd in Durban and Sime Darby Hudson & Knight (Pty) Ltd in Johannesburg earlier today.

"The search and seizure operation forms part of the Commission's ongoing investigation into collusive conduct in the markets for the manufacture and supply of edible oils and margarine to wholesale and retail customers.

"The Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that information relevant to this investigation is in the possession of employees of the two companies," read the statement on the Competition Commission's website.

During the search documents and electronic data were seized for further scrutiny.

"The Commission believes that the information that will be obtained from today's operation will enable the Commission to determine whether or not Unilever SA and Sime Darby have indeed engaged in collusive conduct," acting commissioner Tembinkosi Bonakele said.

In a statement responding to media reports, Sime Darby said it "will cooperate with South African authorities."

Sime Darby said its South African subsidiary Sime Darby Hudson & Knight was "gathering further information on current investigations into alleged contravention of the South Africa's Competition Act. We are treating the matter with the utmost urgency."

“Sime Darby adheres strictly to its business principles which include compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations in the countries in which it operates... As such, we are

treating this development seriously and we will provide full co-operation to the authorities in this investigation,” it added.

Sime Darby Hudson and Knight is a South African producer and retailer of bakery fats, frying oils and bulk industrial fats.

Sime Darby Hudson & Knight. was formerly known as Hudson & Knight. The company was founded in 1950 and is based in Boksburg, South Africa. Sime Darby Hudson & Knight is a subsidiary of Sime Darby Berhad.

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