



(U) New Unregulated Drug Made from Catalytic Converters May Appear in the United States

(U) Key Points

- (U) Bombé is a relatively new drug combination that appears to have emerged in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) around 2019 and increased in popularity in late 2021.
- (U) Bombé is a cheap drug that is made from parts of catalytic converters mixed with various other illicit substances.
- (U) Bombé provides users a brief state of euphoria which leads to a state of catatonia which may last several hours. Users are often referred to as “zombies” as they appear to sleep standing up.
- (U) Street gangs in the DRC are reportedly using Bombé prior to engaging in fights as it causes a feeling of indifference.
- (U) Catalytic converter thefts have been on the rise in Virginia. Bombé could become a secondary source of revenue from these thefts.
- (U) On February 3, 2022, the South African Revenue Service seized three shipments of catalytic converters and the crushed powder from their honeycomb components (the main ingredient in Bombé), valued at nearly 1.4 million USD, bound for Jordan, Dubai, and the United Kingdom from South Africa.

(U) What is Bombé?

- (U) Bombé (“powerful” in the Lingala language) is a brown powder derived from crushing the internal ceramic honeycomb of catalytic converters.
- (U) Bombé is often combined with vitamins and/or sedatives, though it has been found mixed with diazepam, tramadol, diclofenac, ampicillin, and heroine. Bombé is typically snorted as a powder, but can also be smoked with tobacco.
- (U) Bombé typically induces a state of catatonia which can last for hours. Use and withdrawal is often associated with whole-body itchiness.
- (U) A lab in Antwerp, Belgium is reportedly studying the affects of Bombé. However, it is currently unknown how the drug works but it is suspected that the precious metals and exhaust residue from the honeycomb may contribute to the potency of the added illicit substances.
- (U) Bombé is suspected to have contributed to deaths in the DRC and the materials found in the honeycombs have been linked to cancer as well as heart and lung disease.

(U) Considerations

- (U) It has been reported that Bombé use has contributed to catalytic converter thefts in the DRC.
- (U) Sometimes thieves slice open a catalytic converter, steal the honeycomb, replace the part with wires to lessen the noise made by the missing part, and weld the converter shut before reattaching it to the vehicle.



(U) Please report any information pertaining to Bombé to the VFC at VFC@vfc.vsp.virginia.gov.