

# 3 held for possessing ‘spy machine’

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By Solly Maphumulo Comment on this story



**Johannesburg - Three South Africans have been arrested in a dramatic police raid for illegally being in possession of a new generation cellphone tapping, tracking and locator machine known as a “Grabber”.**

A top businessman well known in the gold industry, a bank employee and a top civil servant were arrested in Irene Mall in Pretoria on Friday.

The Star has the identity of the arrested men but can only identify them once they have appeared in court. They were expected to appear on Monday.

Hawks spokesman Hangwani Mulaudzi confirmed the arrests.

He added that more arrests were imminent.

The machine, worth over R25 million, can be used to spy or intercept highly confidential national security information from the country and sell it or exchange it to political enemies.

This could include information about multi-million rand business transactions.

An intelligence operative who wanted to remain anonymous warned: “This is a serious security threat. Only certain people are authorised to use this machine. This is extremely dangerous. No ordinary citizen is supposed to be in possession of this device. That is why the purchase of this device is highly regulated.”

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**The Star**