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Eight Arrested in Vinho Verde Wine Fraud Probe as Certification Scandal Shakes Portugal’s Famed Region

Officials and business owners accused of collusion and bribery, raising doubts over authenticity of internationally recognized wines

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Portuguese police have arrested eight people in the Vinho Verde wine region as part of an investigation into alleged wine fraud involving officials from the region's governing body and local businesspeople. The operation, which included raids on 21 properties, follows reports of collusion between members of the Viticulture Commission of the Vinho Verde Region (CVRVV) and figures in the wine sector. The investigation, known as "Puro Verde" or "Pure Green," has been ongoing since August.

Among those arrested are four members of the CVRVV, specifically from its Inspection and Control Division. These officials are accused of warning wineries about upcoming inspections and accepting bribes in the form of meals, wine, and event tickets. They are also suspected of turning a blind eye to producers who did not meet the requirements for designation of origin (DO) or geographical indication (IG) certification, allowing these producers to label their bottles as Vinho Verde without proper authorization.

Dora Simões, head of the CVRVV, said she was caught off guard by the investigation but confirmed that the organization is cooperating fully with authorities. She addressed rumors about collusion between commission officials and businesspeople, stating that the commission is providing all requested information to police.

The four CVRVV officials who were arrested have been suspended from their duties pending further investigation. In addition to these officials, four business owners involved in the distribution and production of Vinho Verde have also been detained. They face charges including active and passive corruption, document falsification, and abuse of power.

According to reports from Portuguese newspaper Jornal de Notícias and Spanish newspaper La Voz de Galicia, inspectors are suspected of failing to monitor the origin and transit of grapes as well as their storage during the 2025 harvest. Authorities believe that this lack of oversight may have allowed uncertified wines to enter the market under false pretenses.

The CVRVV is responsible for quality control and official certification in the Vinho Verde region, which is known internationally for its distinctive white wines. The current investigation has raised concerns about the integrity of certification processes in one of Portugal's most prominent wine regions. Police continue to gather evidence as they

work to determine the full extent of the alleged fraud.