



CONSUMERS MUST CONTINUE TO PAY THE BILL FOR ILLICIT TRADE

NAIROBI, Thursday 7 April, 2022 – HARD-WORKING Kenyans are again being forced to pick up the bill for the Government’s failure to tackle criminals growing rich on illicit trade, Stop Crime Kenya (StoCK) warns today.

“Announcements in today’s Budget mean the cost of living will continue to rocket,” said StoCK chairman Stephen Mutoro. “Consumers will continue to pay high taxes to fill the Sh153 billion black hole in state coffers carved out by counterfeit, smuggled and other tax-evading goods.

“If Government was serious about raising money to improve lives, it would properly tackle this shadow economy. Instead, it prefers the easier route of squeezing hard-up taxpayers at a time when many are putting their lives back together in the wake of the pandemic.”

In his Budget speech on Thursday, Treasury CS Ukur Yatani announced little relief for the common man.

“CS Yatani was proud to announce he has allocated Sh27.7 billion for affordable housing. But that is the sum he is losing to illicit trade every 10 weeks,” said Mr Mutoro. “He allocated Sh146 billion for health programmes including UHC and Covid-19 management. But that’s less than smugglers and counterfeiters steal from the state every year.

“Imposing high excise and VAT rates is a flawed strategy that will only exacerbate the problem. Higher prices will drive even more consumers to the illicit market, where lives are endangered, criminals are enriched and state coffers are deprived of vital revenue.

“Legitimate businesses will be put under new pressure and livelihoods will be threatened just when families are seeking a return to stability and security. Criminals in illicit trade will continue to dodge paying taxes and today’s Budget simply serves to protect their profit margins.”

-ends-

www.stopcrimekenya.co.ke #StopCrime @stopcrimekenya

