



AUTHORITIES MUST CRACK DOWN ON ILLICIT TRADERS WITH BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS

NAIROBI, Friday, 25 March 2022 – Stop Crime Kenya (StoCK) today condemns the illegal traders responsible for the deaths of at least five people who drank illicit brew in Kimilili, Bungoma County, and urges authorities to help prevent similar tragedies in the future.

The five deceased were among more than 15 villagers hospitalised on Wednesday after consuming chang'aa believed to have been contaminated with toxic chemicals.

StoCK chairman Stephen Mutoro said: “This latest unnecessary loss of life is yet more proof that authorities are losing the battle against illicit trade.

“Illicit alcohol is a menace that is spreading misery and devastation across the country. It kills unwitting consumers who drink lethal concoctions that have never been regulated. It robs the fiscus of vital tax revenue that could improve the lives of our most vulnerable citizens. And it destroys the livelihoods of honest workers trying to support their families in the legal sector.

“The alarming volume of illicit alcohol on open sale is a threat to our health, economy and security. Measures to combat illicit alcohol – and illicit trade in general – should be a national priority.”

An estimated 30,000 young people die each year, with many more suffering permanent defects, as a result of consuming illegally brewed alcohol.

Mr Mutoro, who is also the Secretary General at the Consumers Federation of Kenya (Cofek), wants Government to order random onsite testing of the quality of wines, beers and spirits and impose severe penalties on the manufacturers, distributors and retailers believed to control 70% of Kenya’s multi-billion-shilling alcohol industry.

“As well as stealing from the state’s coffers, these corrupt businesses have blood on their hands. Honest, hard-working citizens should call them out and authorities should deal with them in a manner that stops them plying their deadly trade once and for all.”

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