

## **DEADLY EPIDEMIC**

### **ILLICIT BREW TRAGEDY POINTS TO A NATIONAL MENACE, WARNS StoCK**

Sunday, 15 August - STOP Crime Kenya (StoCK) has backed calls for greater Government accountability over the illicit liquor menace that has claimed 10 lives in Nakuru County in the past week.

At least 10 people have died and nine have been hospitalized since drinking an unidentified brew at Kabatini location of Bahati subcounty. [Nakuru Governor Lee Kinyanjui has accused senior officers](#) at the Ministry of Interior of turning a blind eye to an impending catastrophe.

StoCK chairman Stephen Mutoro says: “This avoidable tragedy is sadly indicative of a much wider problem which the State must address urgently.

“Illicit alcohol is a scourge that is wreaking 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 increasing volume of illicit alcohol on the market is a threat to our health, economy and security.

“Measures to combat illicit alcohol – and illicit trade in general – should be a national priority.”

Mr Mutoro wants Government to order random onsite testing of the quality of wines and spirits and impose severe penalties on the manufacturers, distributors and retailers engaged in selling illicit brews.

It is believed the Bahati victims died after consuming a drink made of chemicals.

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

The Bahati tragedy came in the same week as [StoCK raised the alarm over a flood of fake excise stamps](#) that are being used to introduce fake and smuggled products into the Kenyan retail market.

The Consumers Federation of Kenya (Cofek), of which Mr Mutoro is secretary-general, [wrote to President Uhuru Kenyatta in April](#) urging a crackdown on the illicit manufacturers and traders who account for 70% of Kenya's alcohol market.

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