

Clampdown on illegal liquor trade in Northern Cape

Ten illegal liquor outlets that were found to be operating without licences were shut down during a blitz inspection operation that took place in Kuruman and surrounding areas this weekend. The shutdown was part of a joint-operation comprising the National Liquor Authority (NLA) of the Department of Trade and Industry (the DTI) in partnership with the Northern Cape Liquor Board and the South African Police Services (SAPS).



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The operation inspected 70 liquor outlets, and 40 were issued with compliance notices for contravening the country's liquor laws. Fines to the value of R5,000 were issued and more than 860 litres of liquor were confiscated by the SAPS officers. Liquor outlets ranging from taverns, restaurants and distributors were raided in Kuruman, Mothibistad, Batlharos and Kathu.

According to liquor inspector of the Northern Cape Liquor Board, Mpho Bhunu, the inspection blitz was meant to address the increasing number of underage drinking, non-adherence to the licence conditions, violation of trading hours and to enforce compliance among liquor traders and distributors.

"Liquor outlets showing a blatant disregard of the Liquor Act and irresponsible trading will be prosecuted. Non-compliance relates to the selling of liquor to minors, selling after official trading hours, selling to already intoxicated patrons and pregnant women, and selling of liquor for consumption other than on the licensed premises," said Bhunu.

He added that they were made aware of the mushrooming of illegal taverns in these areas and the increasing levels of

alcohol abuse. "Our office uses targeted interventions such as blitz operations as an opportunity to urge people to take responsibility for their lives by refraining from drinking irresponsibly. To those people who trade illegally, they are encouraged to come to the Liquor Board offices and enquire about processes of attaining a liquor license or face the wrath of the law," said Bhunu.

Colonel Sello Motau of the National SAPS Liquor Control Office said that there were continuous reports of many accounts in the areas visited, where young people were increasingly falling prey to alcohol and substance abuse. "It goes without saying that alcohol abuse is a contributing factor to social ills experienced. We must ensure that traders and consumers of alcohol adhere to compliance with the laws designed to bring about responsible liquor trading and consumption," added Motau.

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