

Alcohol laws for review after several deaths in EA country

NAIROBI

KENYA will complete the review of all alcohol laws by the end of 2014 as 20 people lost their lives after consuming adulterated alcohol over the past week, officials said on Sunday.

Interior Principal Secretary Mutea Iringo told journalists in Nairobi that three bills are at various stages in Parliament.

"They are all aimed at streamlining the industry so as to enhance the control and safety of alcoholic drinks," Iringo said.

In the past two months alone, over 100 Kenyans have lost their lives after consuming illicit and adulterated alcohol.

"We have also completed the profiling of all manufacturers, retailers and

importers of alcoholic drinks in 27 counties," the official said.

The remaining 20 counties are expected to submit their reports by the end of the week. "When profiling is complete, we will shut down all unauthorized operators," he said.

National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) Chairman John Mututho said an alcohol crisis response center has been established.

"It will be used to report any information on illegal alcohol business or any injury or death caused by alcohol," Mututho said.

The call line will also be used for online counseling of affected families. The chairman said methanol has now been added to the list of goods that are

subjected to pre-export verification of conformity.

"This will facilitate in monitoring and surveillance of the substance in the market," he said. Kenya also plans to harmonize laws relating to both ethanol and methanol.

"We want to remove the price difference which makes people to disguise ethanol as methanol in order to avoid paying taxes," he said.

Mututho said there are ongoing consultations with stakeholders to ban the refilling of alcoholic drinks in used bottles and to ensure there is a mechanism for recycling crashed bottles.

NACADA said all alcoholic drinks in the market must be tested by an accredited laboratory before being allowed into the market.