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HIGH-ALCOHOL BEER LINKED TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE; AL JAMA-AH CALLS FOR STRONGER TAX AND POLICY MEASURES

Beer with high alcohol content is closely linked to gender-based violence, and its harmful impact must be reduced through targeted policy interventions, including promoting lower-alcohol alternatives below 2.5% alcohol by volume, compared to the current average of approximately 4% to 6%.

AL JAMA-AH has submitted its proposals to the National Treasury calling for urgent reforms to the taxation and regulation of alcoholic beverages, with a specific focus on reducing alcohol-related harm across South African communities.

The Party emphasises that alcohol abuse has been identified as a direct driver of gender-based violence and femicide, a national crisis that continues to devastate families and communities. Excessive alcohol consumption contributes significantly to domestic abuse, violent behaviour, and the erosion of social stability.

In its submission, AL JAMA-AH highlights that most beer consumed in South Africa falls within the 4% to 6% alcohol by volume range. The Party supports a differentiated excise tax system that imposes higher duties on stronger alcoholic products, while encouraging the production and consumption of lower-alcohol alternatives, including those within the 0.5% to 2.5% range.

AL JAMA-AH further supports the introduction of additional excise tiers based on alcohol strength to ensure that taxation is aligned with the level of public health risk. This approach is intended to incentivise manufacturers to develop lower-strength products while discouraging the consumption of high-alcohol-content beverages.

The Party also endorses the consideration of minimum unit pricing as a complementary intervention to reduce access to inexpensive, high-strength alcohol, particularly in vulnerable communities where the risk of abuse remains high.

In addition, AL JAMA-AH proposes the introduction of a 10% "harm tax" on the turnover of all companies, wine farms, producers, and traders involved in the manufacture and sale of alcoholic products. This measure is based on the principle that the alcohol industry must take responsibility for the social and economic harm associated with its products. The state should not bear the burden of costs arising from alcohol-related harm. Revenue generated from this harm tax will be directed towards funding casualty wards, rehabilitation centres, and providing support and relief to victims of gender-based violence.

In addition, AL JAMA-AH notes that alcohol misuse imposes significant socio-economic costs, including increased healthcare expenditure, crime, lost productivity, and pressure on social services. These impacts continue to outweigh the revenue generated through alcohol taxation and negatively affect families and communities.

Reducing harmful alcohol consumption is essential to protecting women and children, strengthening families, and improving community safety.

AL JAMA-AH believes that targeted fiscal measures, including increased excise duties on higher-alcohol-content beverages, should be considered to discourage harmful consumption and support public health objectives.

AL JAMA-AH calls on the National Treasury to adopt these evidence-based measures as part of a comprehensive national response to alcohol abuse and its impact on gender-based violence.
ENDS

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