



STATEMENT ON ADULTERATED GIN (CITY 5) AND DEATH OF CONSUMERS IN ARUA CITY AND NEIGHBOURING DISTRICTS

In exercising its mandate of Promoting and Enforcing National Standards in order to Protect the Safety and Health of the Public against Consumption of Harmful and Substandard Products on the Market, Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) prohibits the importation, manufacture, sale, distribution or holding for the purpose of selling any product that does not conform with the Compulsory Uganda Standards.

It is against this background that UNBS Enforcement Team traveled to Arua City on the 21st August, 2022 to establish the circumstances under which about 17 people who consumed a Local Gin known as City 5 died and others taken ill after its consumption.

The Bureau joined the Uganda Police Force and Local Authorities to investigate the matter and in particular pick the necessary product Samples of the City 5 Gin for Laboratory Analysis in order to ascertain its contents and ingredients therein which could have caused the sudden death of its consumers.

By the time UNBS Team arrived in Arua City, the Uganda Police Force had already apprehended Four (4) Suspects and taken them in to custody at Arua Central Police Station. The suspects included the manufacturers and the person who was selling the City 5 Gin in a particular Kiosk (Bar).

The Uganda Police Force had also picked the Sample of the packaged bottles of City 5 Gin from the Kiosk where most of the Victims has purchased it from and this led

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them to the Factory where the Gin was suspected to have been manufactured from called **Luluwiri Fruit Wine** located at Pajulu.

The Bureau noted that it had certified Luluwiri Fruit Wine to produce **Semi-Sweet Still Table Pineapple Wine** after undergoing conformity assessment and that the same Luluwiri Fruit Wine had attempted to apply for certification of **City 5 Pineapple Flavored Gin** which failed Laboratory Analysis for having Low Alcohol Content which was below 37.5% volume required of a Gin as per specifications of the standard. Therefore, the City 5 Gin had not yet been certified by UNBS for conformity to the relevant standards and therefore should have not been in production and for sale to the public.

Accordingly, the Bureau together with Uganda Police inspected the Luluwiri Fruit Wine Factory and found Forty (40) unmarked drums containing Alcohol and Eight (8) filled jerrycans containing Alcohol. Eight (8) Samples were therefore picked from this for Laboratory Analysis by UNBS.

UNBS also picked two (2) Samples from a nearby facility called **Dbtech Enterprises** which had also applied for certification of another Gin called **A-City** and found Six (6) unmarked drums containing Alcohol. UNBS had also not yet completed the conformity assessment for this product and is not allowed to be on the market.

RESULTS FROM LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES

1. The Sample picked by Uganda Police Force from the Kiosk where the product was being sold was found to have been adulterated with excessive levels of Methanol above the maximum limit of 50 milligrams per litre (mg/L) and had low levels of Ethanol below 37.5% mass per volume (v/v) specified in the Standard.



2. Five (5) Samples out of the Eight (8) picked from Luluwiri Fruit Wine were found to have been adulterated with excessive levels of Methanol above the maximum limit of 50 miligram per litre (mg/L) and had very low levels of Ethanol below 37.5% mass per volume (v/v) specified in the standard.
3. One (1) Sample out of the two (2) picked from Dbtech Enterprises was found to have been adulterated with excessive levels of Methanol above maximum limit of 50 miligrams per litre (mg/L) specified in the standard.

CONCLUSION

- Based on results from the Laboratory Analysis, it is clear that the likely that the cause of death for the people who consumed the City 5 Gin was due to excessive adulteration of the Gin with Methanol which was found to be between 17 to 16,183 times far more higher than the permissible level of 50 miligrams per litre (mg/L) which is specified in the standard for Gin.
- It is likely that the perpetrators deliberately and illegally used Methanol as a cheaper alternative to increase the potency of the City 5 Gin, instead of Ethanol which is commonly used in making Alcoholic Beverages.
- Unlike Ethanol, Methanol is poisonous for human consumption since is can easily be absorbed through the eyes, skin, lungs and digestive system with its over exposure causing death.
- Methanol is an industrial chemical which is mostly used to create fuel and as a solvent, antifreeze or denaturant for ethanol and in synthesis of other



chemicals, plastics, polyesters e.t.c. Methanol is also commonly used for diluting /dissolving Wall Paints and Wood Vanishes.

ACTIONS TAKEN AND TO BE TAKEN BY THE BUREAU

- The suspects involved in the manufacture and sale of City 5 Gin have been arrested and are in custody of Uganda Police Force.
- The Bureau has sealed off and suspended the production facilities where Adulterated Gin was found until further notice.
- The Bureau has suspended the certification process of products from the suspected production facilities until further notice.
- The Bureau has placed Advertisements in Local Radios in West Nile Region to caution people against consumption of City 5 Gin and other uncertified Beverages.
- The Bureau will intensify its enforcement activities on the market against producers of uncertified Alcoholic Beverage and other Consumer Products.
- The Bureau has already established a Regional Office in Gulu with fully fledged Food Safety Testing Laboratories to provide quality assurance and conformity assessment of all products manufactured and produced in Northern and West Nile Regions
- The Bureau appeals to the Enterprises involved in the production, manufacturing, processing and value adding activities to voluntarily embrace application of Quality Standards in their businesses as part of their Social Responsibility of protecting the lives of Ugandans.
- We also appeal to the General Public and Local Authorities to be vigilant and always report anyone involved in the production and distribution of uncertified products to Bureau to take necessary action.



- We call upon all Ugandans to join hands in promoting the quality culture of consuming safe and quality products which are certified by UNBS. We should avoid looking for cheaper and often harmful alternatives which are detrimental to our health and safety.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their Dear Ones.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

For more Information, Please Contact us on:

Uganda National Bureau of Standards

Plot 2 - 12, Bypass Link, Bweyogerere Industrial and Business Park,

P.O Box 6329

KAMPALA -UGANDA.

Telephone: 256- 417 -333250

Toll Free Line: 0800133133

E-mail: info@unbs.go.ug / ed@unbs.go.ug

Website: www.unbs.go.ug

DAVID LIVINGSTONE EBIRU
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SUMMARY OF RESULTS FROM LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES

The Samples were analysed against Uganda Standard US EAS 145: 2018 – Gin – Specification.

SNO	Sample Number(Field Number)	Source of sample	Samples submitted	Methanol – 50mg/L (max)	Ethanol – 37.5 %v/v (min)	Remarks
1.	L/3281/2022C (MKTSURV/GL05322)	CPS Arua	5 x 200mls	2.576	28.2	Failed – Excessive Methanol and very Low Ethanol
2.	L/3282/2022C (MKTSURV/GL05422)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	1 x 500mls	<20	92.2	Pass
3.	L/3283/2022C (MKTSURV/GL05522)	Dibtech Enterprises	6 x 200mls	873	93	Failed – Excessive Methanol
4.	L/3284/2022C (MKTSURV/GL05622)	Dibtech Enterprises	6 x 200mls	<20	92.9	Pass
5.	L/3285/2022C (MKTSURV/GL05722)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	5 x 200mls	302.923	<1	Failed – Excessive Methanol and Very Low ethanol

6.	L/3286/2022C (MKTSURV/GL05822)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	6 x 200mls	807,053	<1	Failed – Excessive Methanol and Very Low Ethanol
7.	L/3287/2022C (MKTSURV/GL05922)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	6 x 200mls	<20	95.9	Pass
8.	L/3288/2022C (MKTSURV/GL06022)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	5 x 200mls	809,193	<1	Failed – Excessive Methanol and Very Low Ethanol
9.	L/3289/2022C (MKTSURV/GL06122)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	5 x 200mls	<20	95.9	Pass
10.	L/3290/2022C (MKTSURV/GL06222)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	5 x 200mls	793,690	<2	Failed – Excessive Methanol and very Low Ethanol
11.	L/3291/2022C (MKTSURV/GL06322)	Luluwiri Fruit Wine/ City 5 Distillers	2 x 250mls	259,263	33.8	Failed – Excessive Methanol and Low Ethanol