



ABAN MEDIA RELEASE

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Stop Asbestos Deaths in Asia Pacific

Asian Ban Asbestos Network Online Conference 28-30 September 2021.

In parts of Asia, carrying 500 grams of one white powder can draw a death sentence, but importing 1,000 tons of another lethal white dust is both legal and profitable.

Asbestos, a known carcinogen banned in much of the world, is a common and dangerous building block in much of Asia's development and construction boom.

Asbestos is directly responsible for 209,000 mainly occupational deaths per year, according to a new report released from ILO WHO last week.

Across Asia activists from trade unions, from the scientific, medical, environmental and media as well as victims and their families are working to sound the alarm on this 'silent killer' and exposing the dirty trade and those profiting from it.

Asia is the region in the world consuming more than 80% of all asbestos traded globally in 2021, as more than 66 countries and regions such as European Union Australia, Japan, South Korea and Nepal have already banned the import and use of the substance.

This week the ABAN network are staging an international online conference to help push to end this ongoing and completely avoidable tragedy.

While pandemics such as COVID dominate the headlines public concern, clouds of asbestos fibers in factories and on construction sites across the developing world are more likely to draw official shrugs and denials. In some Asian nations including China, asbestos has been in the top ten causes of occupational disease in laborers, some of whom were exposed as working children. The numbers are generally thought to be higher since much of Asia's data rely on a highly mobile workforce with high a turnover rate. It also doesn't include families and communities whose contamination is likely to go unreported. The global Burden of Disease estimates suggest Vietnam is seeing over 2,000 deaths a year and Indonesia over 1,000 per year.

In countries where it is banned, most think the asbestos issue is done and literally dusted. It's not. It's still big business for the very few countries that still mine and export it, primarily Russia.

The 3 day conference will hear from victims struggling with asbestos disease from 4 countries, from international experts including the International Commission on Occupational Health and the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency of the Australian Government and from asbestos ban networks across Asia.

No amount of asbestos exposure is safe, but asbestos generally has the worst effects when a person is exposed to an intense concentration, or are exposed on a regular basis over a long period of time. But even short exposures like the demolition of an asbestos cement garden shed have been known to induce fatal disease.

Asbestos accumulates in the body with every exposure, and there is no known way to reverse the damage it causes.

Asbestos is still here and now and still killing in the Asia Pacific region. Contact the leading activists to get a picture of what is being done and needs to be done or arrange interviews with key speakers. Be part of this other global health crisis.

The following hashtags will take you the social media coverage:

#NoMoreKill

#BanAsbestosNow

#AsbestosKills

#StopTheDirtyBusiness

#ABAN2021Media Spokespersons ABAN Conference

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