



ABREA



Associação
Brasileira dos
Expostos ao
Amianto



PRESS RELEASE

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STOP – You’re Killing Us!

Last week, Brazil’s former asbestos giant, Eternit SA announced that it planned to cease production of asbestos-containing products for the domestic market but continue to export asbestos fiber to “dozens of countries” including “the United States, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and other Asian countries.”¹

On behalf of asbestos victims in Brazil and Asia and campaigning bodies representing trade unionists, health and safety campaigners and ban asbestos activists we deplore this double standard which implies that Brazilian lives are worth protecting but those of Indian, Indonesian and other Asian citizens are not.

Commenting on this hypocrisy, President Eliezer João de Souza of the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed (ABREA) said:

“The fact that Eternit has finally accepted that the production of asbestos products is unacceptable in Brazil is to be welcomed but the continuation of mining and exports is not. ABREA members know all too well the fate of those exposed to asbestos and feel that it is a **national disgrace** our country is exporting this toxic substance.”

Echoing these views, Sugio Furuya of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) said:

“Most of the around 1.5 million tonnes of asbestos produced every year is used in Asian countries where it is regarded as just another raw material. Epidemics of asbestos-related diseases have been documented in Japan and Korea with cases of asbestos-related diseases having been diagnosed in India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Mongolia – many more are expected!”

Conditions in asbestos factories in India – the world’s largest importer of asbestos – are atrocious according to Pooja Gupta, National Coordinator of the India Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN):

“Footage shot by one of our members on June 3, 2018 at a ‘modern’ asbestos factory in Kolkata, West Bengal revealed an abysmal failure to protect workers from high levels of airborne asbestos during the manufacture of asbestos roofing sheets. In small-scale units and back street workshops, the situation is even worse. If asbestos was no longer available, Indian companies would be forced to transition to safer technologies.”

Speaking on behalf of the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN), Darisman asked Eternit to consider:

“How many more people will you kill? Asbestos is a toxic material which has proven to be deadly and has been outlawed by Brazil’s Supreme Court. And even so, you want to export it to Asia?! You need to know that at this time many people are suffering and

¹ Pavini, A. *Eternit deixa de usar amianto em seus produtos e mina produzirá só para exportação [Eternit stops using asbestos in its products and mine will produce only for export]*. January 11, 2019. <https://www.arenadopavini.com.br/arenas-das-empresas/eternit-deixa-de-usar-amianto-em-seus-produtos-e-mina-produzira-so-para-exportacao>

dying in Indonesia from diseases caused by exposures to asbestos. You must stop exporting killer asbestos! Your hypocritical behaviour is the cause of a humanitarian disaster for Asian countries and we publicly condemn you for your actions.”

Summing up the consensus Fiona Murie, Global Director of Construction and Occupational Safety and Health at the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI), said:

“People working in the construction industry are amongst those worst affected by asbestos workplace exposures. This is why the BWI has been supporting calls for a global asbestos ban for over 30 years. It is simply unacceptable for Eternit Brazil to dump its asbestos on industrializing countries where workers have few, if any, protections and no access to benefits or medical care when they become ill. The mining of asbestos in Brazil and elsewhere must be stopped with support provided by governments to affected workers and communities.”

Notes for Editors

1. For further information, please: email Sugio Furuya (ABAN) at 2009aban@gmail.com or Fernanda Giannasi (ABREA) at fer.giannasi@terra.com.br
2. For more information on the groups which issued this release see:
 - *Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto* [Brazilian Association of Asbestos Victims (ABREA)]
<http://www.abrea.org.br>
 - Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN)
<http://anroev.org/aban>
 - Building and Woodworkers International (BWI)
<https://www.bwint.org>
 - Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA – BAN)
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 - International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)
<http://ibasecretariat.org>