

Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK

Tony Whitston (Chair)

Joanne Carlin (Secretary)

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The Rt Hon David Cameron MP
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

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Dear Prime Minister,

Our names are Vera and Ann. We have both lost our husbands to mesothelioma, a fatal disease caused by exposure to asbestos. In our community in Greater Manchester, we are part of a support group for families who have been bereaved by this terrible disease. Some of them have added their signatures to our letter. In time, we could have covered pages with such signatures. But there is no time.

There is no time because the Quebec government will soon make a decision on providing a \$58 million loan to open a new operation of the Jeffrey asbestos mine. This mine has the capacity to produce 5 million tonnes of asbestos over the next 25 years. This asbestos will not be used in Canada because it is deemed too dangerous for domestic use. Instead, it will be exported, mainly to developing countries in Asia, where it will be used without protection.

In desperation, a delegation from Asian countries, some of whom suffer the consequences of exposure to asbestos, are in Quebec today to ask Canada to stop producing and exporting asbestos to their countries.

We are also part of a delegation: a delegation delivering this letter to you personally on behalf of all those who are suffering from mesothelioma, and all those who have died from mesothelioma in the UK which has the highest incidence of mesothelioma world-wide. Our fate will be visited on many Asian countries unless action is taken now. Our country stood by and watched a needless epidemic of occupational disease afflict thousands of our citizens: we have yet to see another 60,000 die from mesothelioma due to past asbestos exposure in the UK, mainly to asbestos mined in Canada.

Alone, asbestos victims and their supporters cannot stop the madness of this new asbestos mine. We need our government to make immediate and strenuous diplomatic efforts to persuade Canada to stop exporting death. We ask you to

take urgent action, in concert with other concerned governments, to persuade Canada to abandon its destructive policy.

We ask this in the name of all those innocent people who have needlessly lost their lives to asbestos diseases in this country. The very least we can do in their memory, and for all those suffering today, and for all those who will die tomorrow, is to stifle the re-birth of Canada's dying asbestos industry; for Canada's sake and that of thousands of people around the world.

Yours sincerely,

Vera Rigby

Ann Oldham

Delegation

Laurie Kazan-Allen

(International Ban Asbestos Secretariate)

Fiona Murie

(Global Director Occupational Health and Safety and Construction
Building and Woodworkers International)

John McClean

(GMB, Director of Health and Safety)

Tony Whitston

(Chair, Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum – UK)