



Associação  
Brasileira dos  
Expostos ao  
Amianto



Press Release

March 5, 2025

## Killer Double Standards in Brasilia

Brazilian asbestos, banned at home, continues to poison millions of people in India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe etc. whilst simultaneously enriching Brazilian stakeholders at Eternit S.A. and its subsidiary Sama S.A. Minerações Associadas.<sup>1</sup>

In 2023, international sales of Brazilian asbestos were worth \$103,000,000, making Brazil the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest exporter. In December 2024 alone, shipments of this lethal material earned \$7.67m. Deadlines published by the Supreme Court (STF) for ending the legal limbo in which exports of this prohibited substance continued were inexplicably postponed in August and October 2024.<sup>2</sup>

According to the STF's online schedule, virtual proceedings on ADI 6200 – a lawsuit started in 2019 which categorized as unconstitutional Goiás State laws exempting asbestos mining from the Supreme Court ban – are scheduled for March 7-14, 2025.<sup>3</sup> From nine eligible STF Justices, two have voted to stop mining immediately, one to allow a one-year phase-out period and another endorsed a five-year extension of activities. The Court's verdict will be decided by the remaining five STF Justices who are adjudicating this case.

Commenting on the STF's asbestos paralysis the Coordinator of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) Sugio Furuya said:

“It is now more than seven years since Brazil's Supreme Court banned the mining, processing, marketing and distribution of chrysotile (white) asbestos and ships are still leaving Brazilian ports with holds full of a mineral deemed carcinogenic by major international health agencies. Brazilian citizens enjoy constitutional protections from exposures to deadly asbestos; unfortunately, the STF looks disinclined to extend these rights to others. It seems that home-grown asbestos, too toxic for domestic use, is acceptable for external consumption.”<sup>4</sup>

Indian medical experts have been outspoken about the country's inability to cope with the impending tsunami of asbestos-related diseases and cancers.<sup>5</sup> According to Dr Abhijeet Vasant

<sup>1</sup> OEC. *Asbestos in Brazil*. Accessed March 1, 2025.

<https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/asbestos/reporter/bra>

Kazan-Allen, L. *Brazil Bans Asbestos!* December 1, 2017.

<http://ibasecretariat.org/lka-brazil-bans-asbestos.php>

<sup>2</sup> STG News Editorial Team. *Brasil permanece como o terceiro maior exportador mundial de amianto* [Brazil remains the world's third largest exporter of asbestos]. February 25, 2025.

<https://racismoambiental.net.br/2025/02/25/brasil-permanece-como-o-terceiro-maior-exportador-mundial-de-amianto/>

Kazan-Allen, L. *Christmas for Eternit in Brazil*. August 19, 2024.

<http://www.ibasecretariat.org/lka-christmas-for-eternit-in-brazil.php>

<sup>3</sup> Brazilian Supreme Court News Portal. Accessed March 1, 2025.

<https://portal.stf.jus.br/processos/detalhe.asp?incidente=5738022>

<sup>4</sup> Email from Sugio Furuya. March 2, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Jadhav, A.V., Gawde, N.C. *Current Asbestos Exposure and Future Need for Palliative Care in India*. 2019.

<https://jpalliativecare.com/content/137/2019/25/4/pdf/IJPC-25-587.pdf>

Jadhav, lead author of an asbestos research project undertaken by Mumbai's Tata Institute of Social Sciences:

“While other countries have restricted or ended asbestos use to protect populations from hazardous exposures, India seems unwilling to do either. In 2023, nearly 500,000 tonnes of asbestos were imported to India. In the coming decades more than 6 million people in India could contract an asbestos-related disease with 600,000 suffering from mesothelioma and cancers of the lung, larynx, ovaries. It's a ticking timebomb with horrific consequences for patients, their families, communities, public and medical services. We are not prepared.”<sup>6</sup>

Indonesia is the world's second biggest market for Brazilian asbestos; in December 2024, it imported \$1.44m of Brazilian asbestos which accounted for over 5% of all sales that month. Ninety per cent of the asbestos is used for making asbestos-cement roofing which remains legal in Indonesia, even though it is banned in Brazil.

According to Muchamad Darisman, Coordinator of the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN):

“Asbestos-related disease is not a myth! In 2016, the first asbestos case [in Indonesia] was identified in a worker from an asbestos manufacturing company; the following year more cases were reported. In 2018, 27% of occupational disease claims submitted to the Social Insurance Administration Organization were for asbestos-related diseases. In 2019 our colleague Siti Kristina, a former textile worker and asbestosis patient, was a member of the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to Brazil. Speaking to Supreme Court Justices she reported widespread ignorance about asbestos in Indonesia and said that most workers did not have access to information about asbestos. ‘Medical testing was,’ Siti said ‘expensive and out of reach for most workers so people live and die with asbestos conditions. This is the situation for many of my friends...our deaths are the price paid for their profits.’ The immoral and unjustifiable double standard which exists can be stopped by the Brazilian Supreme Court. We strongly urge it to do so.”<sup>7</sup>

Concurring with her colleagues from abroad, Brazilian engineer and co-founder of the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed (ABREA) Fernanda Giannasi said:

“ABREA will continue to fight hard and uncompromisingly to remove from our legal system unconstitutional state laws, such as those of the state of Goiás, which authorise the export of the carcinogenic mineral and defy the decision of the country's Supreme Court, the STF, which banned asbestos throughout the national territory in 2017.

We will not compromise in this disproportionate arm wrestling with the corporate interests of the death industry and its supporters in order to prevent the continuation of this practice of double standards or double morals which condemns to early deaths citizens in more socio-politically and environmentally vulnerable societies.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kasturi, C.S. *'We are all exposed to it': the human face of India's asbestos timebomb*. December 19, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/dec/19/we-are-all-exposed-to-it-the-human-face-of-indias-asbestos-timebomb>

<sup>7</sup> Email from M. Darisman. March 2, 2025.  
Also see: *Asian Ban Asbestos Mission Briefing*. 2019.

<http://ibasecretariat.org/press-briefing-asian-ban-asbestos-mission-to-brazil-apr-2019.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Email from Fernanda Giannasi. March 2, 2025.

## Notes for Editors

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2. Information about the groups which issued this press release can be accessed at:
  - International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)  
Website: <http://ibasecretariat.org>
  - Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto (ABREA)  
[Brazilian Association of the Asbestos Exposed]  
Website: <http://www.abrea.org.br>
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