



Press Release

August 20, 2024

Mystery at the Brazilian Supreme Court

The final Supreme Court (STF) ruling on the illegality of asbestos mining in Brazil, in contravention of a 2017 national ban, was scheduled for August 14, 2024. Asbestos victims, campaigners and lawyers for the injured made their way to Brasilia from several states to stand witness to this historic moment. It never came.¹

With no explanation, the Court carried on business as usual but neglected to deliver the verdict in this case. Observers were dumfounded. Engineer Fernanda Giannasi, co-founder of the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed (ABREA) said:

“Having campaigned so long to shut down this deadly industry, we truly believed that the end was in sight when the decision on the last pending case was scheduled to be handed down on August 14. Sitting in the Court, we recalled our friends and comrades whose lives had been sacrificed by asbestos companies. As we waited, we remembered the twists and reversals in this saga including the court cases, injunctions, propaganda wars, illegal agreements, judicial U-turns, intimidation and spying propagated by asbestos vested interests. We knew that sales of Brazilian asbestos exports had boomed in post-ban years and still accounted for one third of the total revenues of Eternit, the owner of Brazil’s only operational asbestos mine. Nevertheless, we trusted the STF. Were we wrong to do so?”²

The groups supporting this press release represent asbestos victims and trade union members from around the world who had watched with admiration as the Supreme Court in 2017 issued an unprecedented decision outlawing the commercial exploitation of asbestos. Commenting on that event, Sugio Furuya, Coordinator of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) said:

“Never before had such action been taken in an asbestos-producing country. The STF’s decision was truly remarkable; by a stroke of their pen, they protected not only Brazilian workers, consumers and members of the public but people the world over who would no longer experience toxic exposures to Brazilian asbestos.”³

As it transpired, commercial interests were able to circumvent the ban to enable production to continue for a further five years, earning vast sums for Eternit SA, its subsidiary Sama Minerações and their shareholders.

We are united in our appeal to the STF to, once again, take the right course of action and reschedule the delivery of this ruling for the earliest opportunity. The world is watching!

¹ Malheiros, T. *STF adia audiência sobre banimento do cancerígeno amianto na mina de Minaçu, em Goiás* [STF postpones hearing on banning carcinogenic asbestos at the Minaçu mine in Goiás].

<https://taniamalheiros-jornalista.blogspot.com/2024/08/stf-adia-audiencia-sobre-banimento-do.html?m=1>

² Email from Fernanda Giannasi. August 16, 2024.

Eternit fatura com exportação de amianto enquanto espera voto do STF [Eternit makes money from asbestos exports while awaiting the Supreme Court's vote].

<https://economia.uol.com.br/noticias/redacao/2024/08/13/eternit-stf.htm>

Vargas, E. *Eternit (ETER3) sai de recuperação judicial após seis anos de reestruturação* [Eternit (ETER3) emerges from judicial recovery after six years of restructuring]. August 9, 2024.

https://www.terra.com.br/economia/eternit-eter3-sai-de-recuperacao-judicial-apos-seis-anos-de-reestruturacao.a446a953e9ffb843d588faeb7b8a02c4uxnvq1lq.html?utm_source=clipboard

³ Email from Sugio Furuya. August 16, 2024.

Notes for Editors

1. For additional details, please email: Fernanda Giannasi (ABREA) at fer.giannasi@terra.com.br or Laurie Kazan-Allen (IBAS) at lkaz@btconnect.com
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>
 - Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN)
Email: Sugio Furuya at 2009aban@gmail.com
 - Belgian Association of Asbestos Victims (ABEVA)
Website: <https://www.abeva.eu/index.php?lang=fr>
 - Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia
Website: <https://asbestosdiseases.org.au>
 - Merseyside Asbestos Victims Support
Website: <https://mavsg.org/>