

International joint letter to the Yokohama District Court

Dear Honorable Judges Yuko OTAKE, Zen-ichiro UEMURA and Shingo YAMADA

Civil 2nd Division, Yokohama District Court

Japan

We pay tribute to your important role in dispensing justice and protecting human rights under Japanese law.

We are organizations working on asbestos issues in our home countries and around the world in international solidarity. We campaign to achieve the elimination of asbestos-related diseases and justice for victims and their families.

In some European countries and Australia, for example, Governments have started to build mechanisms to secure just compensation for all victims and progress efforts to achieve an asbestos-free society. Active asbestos victims groups have affected positive change in public opinion and raised awareness of international asbestos issues.

On the other hand, asbestos is still used in many countries in Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe where ongoing hazardous exposures added to historic exposures endanger the lives of millions of people on a daily basis.. We are aware that positive precedents set and measures taken by commercial organisations and the Japanese Government to address asbestos injustices can impact on policies in other Asian countries and around the world. Bearing this in mind, we are particularly concerned about the decision which will be made by the Japanese courts in the Construction Asbestos Litigation.

Compared to western countries, asbestos use continued in Japan for many years, long after the health hazards were known to the Government and manufacturers of construction products. Despite awareness of the nature of asbestos-related diseases and the means by which to prevent deadly exposures to asbestos, consumption continued. As a result of this negligence, asbestos-related diseases have occurred and Japanese construction workers are at high risk of contracting these diseases. We support the plaintiffs' claim that their illnesses were due to: the Government's failure to take appropriate and timely measures to prevent asbestos exposures and unlawful conduct by the manufacturers of asbestos-containing construction products.

We urge you to support the rights of Japanese asbestos victims and issue a judgment which is fair to them and their families. We sincerely hope that justice for the victims will be achieved and that the epidemic of asbestos-related diseases will end.

September 7, 2017

Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) <https://www.bwint.org/>
International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) <http://ibasecretariat.org/>
Asian Ban Asbestos Network (A-BAN) <http://anroev.org/aban/>
Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC) <http://www.amrc.org.hk/>
European Federation of Building and Wood Workers (EFBWW)
<http://www.efbww.org/default.asp?Language=EN>
Australia: Union Aid Abroad APHEDA <http://apheda.org.au/>
Australia: Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc (ADSA)
<http://asbestosdiseases.org.au/>
Australia: Asbestos Diseases Advisory Services of Australia Inc (ADASA)
<http://www.asbestosdiseases.org.au/the-asbestos-diseases-advisory-service-of-australia.html>
Australia: Asbestos Disease Support Society (ADSS) <https://www.adss.org.au/>
Australia: Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union (CFMEU)
<https://cg.cfmeu.org.au/>
Belgium: Asbestos Victims Association of Belgium (ABEVA)
<http://www.abeva.eu/index.php?lang=fr>
Bazil: Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto (ABREA)
<http://www.abrea.com.br/>
Canada: RightOnCanada <https://www.rightoncanada.ca/>
Canada: United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) <http://www.ufcw.org/>
Canada: Margaret Keith & James Brophy (University of Windsor Sociology department)
Germany: Bundesverband der Asbestose Selbsthilfegruppen e.V. (Federal Association of Asbestos Victims Groups)
<http://www.asbesterkrankungen.de/index.php/startseite.html>
India: Peoples Training and Research Centre (PTRC)
India: Environics Trust <http://environicsindia.in/>
Indonesia: Local initiative for OSH Network (LION) <http://lionindonesia.org/about-us/>
Indonesia: Federasi Serikat Buruh Kerakyatan / People's Worker Union Federation (SERBUK) <http://serbukindonesia.org/pub/>
Netherlands: European Asbestos Forum Foundation
<http://www.europeanasbestosforum.org/>

Pakistan: National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) <http://www.ntufpak.org/>

Philippines: Associated Labor Unions-Trade union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) <http://tucp.org.ph/>

Russia: Volgograd Ecopress

Switzerland: Solidar Suisse <https://www.solidar.ch/en>

Taiwan: Taiwan Occupational Safety and Health Link <http://www.oshlink.org.tw/>
<http://www.asbestosdiseaseawareness.org/>

UK: Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK (AVSG-UK)
<http://asbestosforum.org.uk/>

UK: Greater Manchester Asbestos Victims Support Group (GMAVSG)
<http://www.asbestos-victims-support.org/>

UK: Merseyside Asbestos Victims Support Group (MAVSG)
<http://asbestosdiseases.org.uk/>

UK: South Yorkshire Asbestos Victims Support Group (SARAG)
<http://saragasbestosupport.org/>

UK: Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team (DAST) <http://asbestosupport.net/>

UK: Hazards Magazine <http://www.hazards.org/index.htm>

USA: Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO)