



**PRESS RELEASE**

**October 20, 2016**

### **India's Asbestos Killing Fields!**

Today, a devastating report has been made public by a consortium of civil society groups which documents the toxic legacy created in two Indian villages by European asbestos multinationals: Turner & Newall Ltd., British owners of Asbestos Cement Ltd. and Etex, Belgian owners of Eternit Everest Industries.

This [Asbestos Investigation and Remedial Options Analysis](#) by a team of three Canadian experts from Environmental Consulting Occupational Health (ECOH) was commissioned by Barrister Krishnendu Mukherjee of Doughty Street Chambers. Reacting to the report's findings, he said:

“The dumping of asbestos waste by European companies in this manner was done in the full knowledge that it would cause serious health problems to the local population. Such behavior towards mainly poor people, without real access to legal remedies, can only be described as a corporate crime. Whilst now trying to make the area safe, we call on the Indian Government to wake up to the dangers of chrysotile asbestos, to support its inclusion in the Rotterdam Convention and to ban its use in the country.”

Mohit Gupta from the Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India (OEHNI) and the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN), who assisted the ECOH investigators, said:

“Everyday up to 8,000 people in Kymore and Kalhara in Madhya Pradesh state are routinely exposed to toxic levels of asbestos in contamination created decades ago by international companies which prioritized corporate profit over workers' health and shareholders' dividends over ethical production processes. The widespread and extensive surficial asbestos contamination documented in this report would cost over \$88 million to eradicate. Who is going to pay for this?”

Commenting on the devastation found in India, Belgian campaigner Eric Jonckheere from the Association Belge des Victimes de l'Amiante [The Belgian Association of Asbestos Victims (ABEVA)] noted:

“In my home town of Kappelle-op-den-Bos, Eternit was forced by OVAM, the Flemish Environment Office, to pay for remediation of tracts of land in 2012 after the success of outreach efforts by ABEVA led to widespread media coverage of the environmental contamination and political pressure from the municipal authorities. If the presence of

asbestos waste constitutes a public health risk in Belgium, how can the dumping of debris containing up to 70% asbestos be tolerated in Kymore and Kalhara?”<sup>1</sup>

### Notes for Editors

1. For further information, please contact Krishnendu Mukherjee at [tublumukherjee@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tublumukherjee@yahoo.co.uk) or Mohit Gupta at: [mohit.gup@gmail.com](mailto:mohit.gup@gmail.com)
2. Background information on asbestos issues in India can be found in India's Asbestos Time Bomb: [http://ibasecretariat.org/india\\_asb\\_time\\_bomb.pdf](http://ibasecretariat.org/india_asb_time_bomb.pdf)
3. For more information on the groups which have issued this press release see the websites of:
  - Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK  
<http://www.asbestosforum.org.uk>
  - Asia Monitor Resource Centre  
<http://www.amrc.org.hk>
  - Asian Ban Asbestos Network  
<http://anroev.org/aban>
  - Association Belge des Victimes de l'Amiante [The Belgian Association of Asbestos Victims (ABEVA)]  
<http://www.abeva.eu>
  - International Ban Asbestos Secretariat  
<http://ibasecretariat.org>

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<sup>1</sup> Kazan-Allen L. *Eternit Ordered to Pay For Belgian Clean-up*. May 23, 2012.  
<http://ibasecretariat.org/lka-eternit-ordered-to-pay-for-belgian-clean-up.php>