

## **WHO's Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Serves as Reminder of Crisis at World's Most Toxic Lead Mine**

- *International human rights lawyers call upon Anglo American to recognize its toxic legacy in Kabwe, Zambia*
- *Generations of children in Kabwe have been exposed to extremely high levels of lead pollution in the environment*
- *The World Health Organization's International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week runs from 24-30 October 2021*

**JOHANNESBURG & LONDON – 25 OCTOBER 2021** – Lawyers from Leigh Day and Mbuyisa Moleele today issued urgent calls for Anglo American South Africa Limited (“AASA”), a subsidiary of London-headquartered multinational mining company Anglo American Plc (LSE: AAL, JSE: AGL), to take responsibility for its contribution to the lead poisoning crisis in Kabwe, Zambia.

AASA is the subject of a [class action lawsuit](#) on behalf of a class estimated to comprise more than 100,000 children and women of child-bearing age in Kabwe, who are believed to have been poisoned by lead. Studies have shown that childhood lead poisoning in Kabwe is amongst the highest in the world. Exposure to lead can cause reduced IQ, behavioral problems, hearing impairment and developmental toxicity in children. Some children in Kabwe have registered Blood Lead Levels (BLLs) that put them at risk of kidney damage, severe brain damage (encephalopathy), severe anemia and even death.

**Zanele Mbuyisa, Partner at Mbuyisa Moleele, said:** “The WHO’s International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is a stark reminder of the lead poisoning crisis in Kabwe. On the one-year anniversary of filing the class action, we again issue an urgent plea to Anglo to acknowledge its toxic legacy in Kabwe and assist children and women of childbearing age who have been poisoned by lead in Kabwe. Unless something is done now, another generation of children risks the same fate.”

**Richard Meeran, Partner & Head of the International Department at Leigh Day, said:** “Lead poisoning in the Kabwe population raises serious cause for alarm and should be properly treated as an emergency health crisis. Generations of children and women of Kabwe experience negative health effects and a poorer quality of life as a direct consequence of lead poisoning. It is unthinkable that such neglect would be tolerated in the UK, US or other developed nations. Lead Poisoning Prevention Week presents an opportunity for Anglo to not only acknowledge its contribution to this serious issue but take meaningful steps towards resolving a crisis it contributed to for nearly 50 years.”

International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is an initiative jointly led by the UN Environment Programme and WHO. According to the WHO, there is no known safe blood lead concentration. More information about Lead Poisoning Prevention Week can be found at:

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/international-lead-poisoning-prevention-week>

More information about the Kabwe class action lawsuit can be found at: [www.childrenofkabwe.com](http://www.childrenofkabwe.com).

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Mbuyisa Moleele is a Johannesburg-based law firm led by Zanele Mbuyisa, and Leigh Day is a leading international law firm specialising in human rights and environmental tort claims against multinational corporations. Both firms have a proven track record of litigating complex international class actions on behalf of victims from developing countries. The case is being funded by Augusta Ventures, the UK's largest litigation fund by volume of claims.

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