

AFREWATCH Repeats Call for the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to Investigate Anglo American

- *One Year On, The Committee Has Not Responded to a Call to Investigate Violations of Children's Rights in Kabwe, Zambia*

KINSHASA – 8 FEBRUARY 2022 – African Resources Watch (“AFREWATCH”) has released a letter to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (“CRC”) repeating its call for the CRC to independently investigate alleged violations of children’s rights in in Kabwe, Zambia, by Anglo American South Africa Limited (“AASA”), a subsidiary of London-headquartered multinational mining company Anglo American Plc.

Anglo American’s 50-year involvement in the Kabwe mining operation has caused, and is continuing to cause, widespread environmental lead contamination and lead poisoning of tens of thousands of children in Kabwe district.

AFREWATCH implores the CRC to urge Anglo American to immediately address any violations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning children’s inherent right to life and the maximum protection thereof. The development of generations of children's physical and mental capacities has been severely compromised around Kabwe, once the site of the world’s most toxic lead mine.

AFREWATCH is a Congolese human rights NGO with over two decades of experience monitoring the impact of the mining sector in the DRC and wider Southern Africa region. The letter follows AFREWATCH’s [initial correspondence](#) with the CRC, in January 2020, which has so far not been acknowledged or addressed.

More information about the Children of Kabwe campaign can be viewed at ChildrenOfKabwe.com.

The full text of the letter follows:

Dear Committee Members,

This correspondence follows our initial letter, dated 30 December 2020, to which we were disappointed to not receive a response. We are writing once again to request the Committee to investigate urgently the ongoing and serious violations to health and development suffered by children living in Kabwe, Zambia.

The situation in Kabwe continues to represent an egregious violation of Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in that the development of thousands of children's physical and mental capacities has suffered serious and widespread ongoing damage.

We estimate that since our last letter to the Committee, over 7,000 babies have been poisoned by lead pollution in Kabwe¹. These children have no opportunity to fully develop and their chances of maximum survival are compromised by the polluted environment in which they are conceived, born, and raised.

The reasons for our submission are outlined in our initial communication and are also summarized below.

Seeking Justice for the Children of Kabwe

Anglo American South Africa's (AASA) 50-year involvement in the Kabwe mining operation caused, and is continuing to cause, widespread environmental lead contamination for and lead poisoning of generations of children in Kabwe district.

A class action lawsuit has been filed against AASA, seeking to achieve justice for the people of Kabwe by pursuing remedies in the form of compensation for the children, as well as girls and women with lead poisoning who have or may become pregnant in the future. Also sought is (a) blood lead screening for children and pregnant women in Kabwe, and (b) clean up and remediation of the area to ensure the health of future generations of children and pregnant women is not jeopardised. The claimants are represented by South African attorneys Mbuyisa Moleele in collaboration with Leigh Day, the international human rights law firm.

The Kabwe case continues to attract widespread media coverage in Zambia, South Africa, and internationally – across publications such as the Financial Times, The Guardian, The Daily Mail, Reuters, Bloomberg, Business Day, The Times of Zambia, and Lusaka Times.

Further information – including a repository of court filings and expert evidence – is available via the dedicated website: www.childrenofkabwe.com.

Our Urgent Plea to the Committee

We implore the Committee to independently investigate whether violations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have and are being committed by Anglo American.

We are grateful in advance for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Emmanuel Umpula Nkumba

Executive Director

AFREWATCH

¹ Estimate base on reported population of Kabwe (270,389) [http://www.cen.gov.zm/?page_id=4780] and Zambia's Central province population growth per annum of 2.7% [<https://zambia.opendataforafrica.org/raigrdf/population-growth-rate>], these being the latest publicly available figures. According to the CIA World Factbook, Zambia's population is youthful. Last accessed 12 January 2022.



-ENDS-

Media Contact

AFREWATCH

Emmanuel Umpula Nkumba

emmanuelumpula@afrewatch.org