



Mercury Policy Project



PRESS RELEASE

Amazon, eBay, Others Urged to Stop Toxic Trade in Illegal Skin Lighteners; NGOs demand removal, vigilance to keep high mercury products off internet

16 December 2019

Following release of test results last month finding high mercury skin lightening creams sold online worldwide, the Zero Mercury Working Group ("ZMWG") is calling on E-commerce giants around the world to remove these illegal products—and keep them off their websites.

Products were purchased by ZMWG partners from: Amazon; Ebay; BidorBuy; Lazada; Jumia; Daraz; and Flipkart. ZMWG noted that while some of these platforms have pledged to remove illegal products, others have not. Also, some who have pledged to removed them have not.

"Lazada, eBay and Daraz pledged to removed illegal high mercury products from their websites, but they are still there," said Michael Bender, ZMWG co-coordinator. "Also, although Amazon removed illegal products from US and EU platforms, they remain offered by Amazon India."

Mercury is used in skin lighteners because it inhibits melanin and results in a lighter skin tone.

Because of toxic exposure risks, cosmetics with mercury levels over 1 part per million (ppm) are banned by many national governments. This is the same limit set by the global mercury treaty, the Minamata Convention.

Of over 150 products tested from 12 countries across African, Asia, Europe and the U.S., 60% exceeded the mercury limit. Levels ranged from 1.9 to 131,000 ppm.

"Not only are these E-commerce profiteers breaking the law, they are placing consumers at unnecessary risk from this dangerous neurotoxin," said Elena, EEB and ZMWG coordinator. "We urge governments to take enforcement action against these illegal toxic traders."

The Group purchased ten illegal products from BidorBuy in South Africa and 7 came from Lazada, the largest e-commerce platform in South East Asia. Six non-compliant products were purchased off from the Daraz website in South Asia (with the Chinese global e-commerce platform Alibaba having a controlling stake in Lazada and Daraz.)

In addition, two high mercury products were purchased from Jumia, an e-commerce platform active in Africa and one non-compliant product came from the Indian-owned e-commerce platform Flipkart. Finally, 17 high mercury products were purchased from eBay and 19 from Amazon.

After test results were presented, Amazon removed more than a dozen products from its U.S. website in late November. Subsequently, they removed additional products from their UK platform. However, high mercury products remain for sale on the Amazon India platform.

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Notes:

¹ **"Ebay told Chemical Watch that it has removed from sale the non-compliant products identified in the report, as did Lazada and Daraz.** <https://chemicalwatch.com/85927/major-retailers-remove-mercury-containing-skin-lighteners-from-sale#overlay-strip>

¹ **An eBay spokesperson said it also removed the items in question and was also "taking enforcement action against the sellers" because such products were banned from eBay's platform.**

<https://www.cosmeticsdesign-europe.com/Article/2019/11/29/Illegal-mercury-skin-lightening-cosmetics-removed-by-Amazon-and-eBay-following-NGO-investigation>

¹ eBay, in an emailed statement, said it is reviewing the report to make sure it is removing any contaminated products.

"Consumers can shop eBay's 1-plus-billion items with confidence, knowing we have key partnerships and processes in place with product manufacturers and regulators to ensure a safe shopping experience," eBay said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-27/amazon-and-ebay-accused-of-selling-cosmetics-with-mercury>

¹ At eBay, ZMWG tested 32 skin lighteners, finding that the company has sold at least 10 noncompliant products in Belgium and seven in the U.S. eBay said it was reviewing its site for the products identified by ZMWG.

"We have key partnerships and processes in place with product manufacturers and regulators to ensure a safe shopping experience," said eBay spokeswoman Ashley Settle in an emailed statement.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/amazon-ebay-address-mercury-laced-skin-creams-11574878756>

Further Information:

- [NGO report](#)
- [UN Environment press release](#)

<https://chemicalwatch.com/85927/major-retailers-remove-mercury-containing-skin-lighteners-from-sale#overlay-strip>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/amazon-ebay-address-mercury-laced-skin-creams-11574878756>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-27/amazon-and-ebay-accused-of-selling-cosmetics-with-mercury>

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2019/11/22/amazon-pulls-skinlightening-creams-from-site-after-demands-from-minnesota-activists>

<https://www.cosmeticsdesign-europe.com/Article/2019/11/29/Illegal-mercury-skin-lightening-cosmetics-removed-by-Amazon-and-eBay-following-NGO-investigation>

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/amazon-uk-removes-skin-lightening-131452879.html>

<https://eeb.org/amazon-ebay-among-websites-found-selling-illegal-mercury-laced-skin-lighteners/>

Annex: Samples exceeding 1 ppm mercury purchased from e-platforms

Table G1: Product name, country of purchase, indicated country of origin, physical shop or e-commerce platform, and mercury content (ppm) for samples exceeding 1 ppm mercury.

Product name	Country of purchase	Country of origin*	Shop/e commerce platform	Mercury content (ppm)	Available ? Date of checking platform
Kim Whitening Ginseng and Pearl Cream	Bangladesh	Thailand	Daraz (e-commerce platform)	17,416.67	10/12 available
Sandal Whitening Beauty Cream	Bangladesh	Pakistan	Daraz (e-commerce platform)	83,633.33	10/12 available
Parley Herbal Whitening Cream	Bangladesh	Pakistan	Daraz (e-commerce platform)	116,600.00	10/12 available
Jiaoli Cream set, cream A	Bangladesh	China	Daraz (e-commerce platform)	9344.33	10/12 available
Jiaoli Cream set, cream B	Bangladesh	China	Daraz (e-commerce platform)	12,513.33	10/12 available
Faiza Beauty Cream	Bangladesh	Pakistan	Daraz (e-commerce platform)	21,406.67	10/12 available
Chandni Whitening Cream	EU	Pakistan	Amazon, UK (e-commerce platform)	11,928.00	11/12 Removed
Golden Pearl Whitening Beauty Cream	EU	Pakistan	Amazon, UK (e-commerce platform)	10,515.00	11/12 Removed
Golden Pearl Whitening Beauty Cream	EU	Pakistan	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	10,338.00	11/12 available
Golden Pearl Whitening Beauty Cream	EU	Pakistan	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	5266.00	11/12 available
Goree Whitening Beauty Anti-ageing spots pimples removing Cream	EU	Pakistan	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	12,656.00	11/12 available
JiaoBi Whitening set, make up base	EU	China	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce)	20,813.00	11/12 available
JiaoBi Whitening set, Night cream	EU	China	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce)	15,404.00	11/12 available

Jiaoli Miraculous Cream set, cream A	EU	China	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	584.70	11/12 removed
Jiaoli Miraculous Cream set, cream B	EU	China	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	1542.90	11/12 removed
Pop Popular Facial Cream Whitening Acne Pimple	EU	Thailand	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	2.20	11/12 available
Pop Popular Facial Cream Whitening Acne Pimple	EU	Thailand	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	1.91	11/12 available
White Rose Whitening Cream (super Gold Caviar)	EU	Thailand	eBay, Belgium (e-commerce platform)	6188.00	11/12 available
Aneeza Gold Beauty Cream	India	Pakistan	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	54,653.33	08/12/19 available
Due Whitening Beauty Cream	India	Pakistan	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	76,333.33	08/12/19 available
Face Fresh Gold, Whitening Cream Age Spots/Freckle and Scars	India	Pakistan	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	97,906.67	08/12/19 available
Goree Day and Night Whitening Beauty Cream	India	Pakistan	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	46.95	09/12/19 available
Jiaoli Miraculous Cream set, cream A	India	China	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	836.43	09/12/19 available
Jiaoli Miraculous Cream set, cream B	India	China	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	10,129.33	09/12/19 available
Kim Whitening Pearl and Snow Lotus Cream	India	Thailand	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	100,500.00	09/12/19 available
Parley Herbal Whitening Cream	India	Pakistan	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	113,833.33	09/12/19 available
POP Popular Facial Cream Whitening Acne Pimple	India	Thailand	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	59.20	09/12/19 available
Stillman's Skin Bleach Cream	India	Pakistan	Flipkart (e-commerce platform)	62.53	09/12/19 available
White Rose Whitening Cream	India	Thailand	Amazon, India (e-commerce platform)	48 840	09/12/19 available
Faiza Beauty Cream	Kenya	Pakistan	Jumia, Kenya (e-commerce platform)	11,313.18	11/12 still available for sale in Kenya on Jumia.co.ke.
Aneeza Gold Beauty Cream	Nigeria	Pakistan	Jumia, Nigeria (e-commerce platform)	20,598.76	10/12 still available

Kim Whitening Pearl and Snow Lotus Cream	Nigeria	Thailand	Jiji through Humduke Nig. Ltd. (e-commerce platform)	2584.46	10/12 removed
Jiaoli Speckle Dispelling & Whitening Cream	Nigeria	China	Jumia, Nigeria (e-commerce platform)	1154.07	
Goree Whitening Beauty Anti-ageing spots pimples removing Cream	Philippines	Pakistan	Lazada, Philippines (e-commerce platform)	130,666.67	Available 12/10/19
Goree Day and Night Whitening Cream	Philippines	Pakistan	Lazada, Philippines (e-commerce platform)	131,566.67	Available 12/10/19
Aneeza Gold Beauty Cream	Philippines	Pakistan	Lazada, Philippines (e-commerce platform)	40,46.67	Available 12/10/19
Golden Pearl Whitening Beauty Cream	Philippines	Pakistan	Lazada, Philippines (e-commerce platform)	73,953.33	Available 12/10/19
RDL Cream	Philippines	Philippines	Lazada, Philippines (e-commerce platform)	47.98	Available 12/10/19
Jiaoli Miraculous Cream set, cream A	Philippines	China	Lazada, Philippines (e-commerce platform)	9083.33	Removed 12/10/19
Jiaoli Miraculous Cream set, cream B	Philippines	China	Lazada, Philippines (e-commerce platform)	18,876.67	Removed 12/10/19
Chandni Whitening Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	28,289.46	10/12 available
Goree Whitening Beauty Anti-ageing spots pimples removing Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	33,082.92	10/12 available
Goree Whitening Beauty Anti-ageing spots pimples removing Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	4352.68	10/12 available
Goree Day and Night Whitening Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	29,686.28	10/12 available
Goree Whitening Soap	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	32,504.63	10/12 available
Sandal Whitening Beauty Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	26,320.95	10/12 available
Face Fresh	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	12.385.26#	10/12 available
Due Whitening Beauty Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	16.664.79	10/12 available

Golden Pearl Whitening Beauty Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	4711.69	10/12 available
Faiza Beauty Cream	South Africa	Pakistan	BidorBuy (e-commerce platform)	5152.27	10/12 available
Jiaoli Cream Jaoc whitening Yan Ying, skin care set	USA	China	eBay, USA (e-commerce platform)	1800.00	10/12 removed
Kim Whitening Pearl and Snow Lotus Cream	USA	Thailand	eBay, USA (e-commerce platform)	19 000	10/12 available
Chandni Whitening Cream	USA	Pakistan	eBay, USA (e-commerce platform)	14,000.00	10/12 removed
Sandal Whitening Beauty Cream	USA	Pakistan	eBay, USA (e-commerce platform)	21,000.00	10/12 available
Face Fresh	USA	Pakistan	eBay, USA (e-commerce platform)	15,000.00	10/12 available
Goree Day and Night Whitening Beauty Cream	USA	Pakistan	eBay, USA (e-commerce platform)	23,000.00	10/12 available
Kim Whitening Pearl and Snow Lotus Cream	USA	Thailand	eBay, USA (e-commerce platform)	14,000.00	10/12 available
Kim Whitening Pearl and Snow Lotus Cream	USA	Thailand	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	16,000.00	10/12 removed
Goree Whitening Beauty Anti-ageing spots pimples removing Cream	USA	Pakistan	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	25,000.00	10/12 removed
Chandni Whitening Cream	USA	Pakistan	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	3400	10/12 removed
Whitening Ginseng and Pearl Cream	USA	Thailand	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	8700	10/12 removed
Whitening Ginseng and Pearl Cream	USA	Thailand	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	8600	10/12 removed
Chandni Whitening Cream	USA	Pakistan	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	22,000.00	10/12 removed
Goree Whitening Beauty Anti-ageing spots pimples removing Cream	USA	Pakistan	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	26,000.00	10/12 removed
Kim Whitening Pearl and Snow Lotus Cream	USA	Thailand	Amazon, USA (e-commerce platform)	13,000.00	10/12 removed

* According to the packaging

Average of the two readings in Table 9, Appendix G.