10 March 2026

Re: Halting the production, marketing, sales and trade of mercury-added whitening creams in Pakistan

Muzammil Aftab, Registrar
Competition Commission of Pakistan
7th, 8th, and 9th Floors
ISE Towers, 55-B
Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area
Islamabad, Pakistan
complaints@cc.gov.pk

Dear Muzammil Aftab:

We, the undersigned, would first like to applaud the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) for publicly recognizing the unlawful production and deceptive marketing of mercury added skin whitening creams in May 2024. At that time, CCP served notices to 12 cosmetic companies for 'greenwashing,' and misleading marketing of toxic skin whiteners.[1] Then in October 2025, CCP followed up by launching a nationwide investigation into the 12 companies.[2]

Mercury in skin whitening creams are known to many local, state, federal, and international agencies as toxic and a risk to human health. Regular application of creams containing mercury can lead to rashes, skin discoloration, and blotching, while long-term exposure to high levels of mercury in cosmetic products can cause serious health consequences, including damage to the skin, eyes, lungs, kidneys, digestive, immune, and nervous systems.

Last year, the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) and its partners from Pakistan, Kenya, the Philippines, and the United States purchased and tested samples from six widely available brands of skin whitening creams made in Pakistan, as per their packaging: Faiza, Golden Pearl, Goree, Aneeza, Parley, and Face Fresh. The results were alarming: 35 of the 37 creams contained mercury levels up to thousands of times higher than the previous legal limit of 1 part per million set by the Minamata Convention on Mercury,[3] with one product reaching 24,000 ppm. Products were tested in accredited laboratories in the EU and the US.[4]

Most recently in the United States, the State of California Department of Public Health issued a *Consumer Alert, "Mercury Found in These Face Creams – Stop Using Immediately"* (see below) on February 17, 2026. One of the products tested by the State of California, "New Face" cream[5]--which appears to have been produced in Pakistan-- had a *dangerously high* mercury level of 210,000 part per million.

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[1] https://cc.gov.pk/home/viewpressreleases/474
[2] https://cc.gov.pk/home/viewpressreleases/689
[3] https://minamataconvention.org/sites/default/files/documents/information_document/Minamata-Convention-booklet-Oct2024-EN.pdf

[4] https://www.zeromercury.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/ZMWG-Zero-Out-Toxic-Production-Oct-2025-Full-Report.pdf
[5] https://newfacepk.com/policies/contact-information

All of the products purchased had already been identified by governments as exceeding the legal limit and relevant warnings have been issued. Nevertheless, the trade of these products continues unimpeded. ZMWG estimates that more than 66 million mercury-added skin whiteners are produced annually, using over 110 metric tons of mercury compounds, with Pakistan, Thailand, and China together accounting for over half of global production.

Finally, to mark this year's International Woman's Day on March 8th, we strongly urge the CCP to address deceptive marketing of mercury added skin lightening products by adhering to the Competition Act of 2010.[6]

This includes follow through with legal actions to put an end to Pakistani manufacturing and marketing of these dangerous and illegal cosmetics both to consumers domestically and around the world. As a party to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, Pakistan is obligated to adhere to the Convention's ban on the production and trade in mercury added skin whitening products.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to email the Mercury Policy Project (mercurypolicy@gmail.com).

Thank you (in advance) for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Michael Bender, Executive Director
Mercury Policy Project
Coordinator
Zero Mercury Working Group
United States

Lori Copan, PharmD, MPH
Chief, Exposure Prevention and Education
California Department of Public Health

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Toxics Link
India

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BAN Toxics
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Griffins Ochieng
Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD)
Kenya

Dr Deogratias Kaheeru Sekimpi
UNACOH
Uganda

Ahmed Tiamiyu
Community Action Against Plastic Waste
Nigeria

[6] https://cc.gov.pk/assets/images/Downloads/competitionn_act_2010.pdf

Dominique Bally
The Centre Africain pour la Santé Environnementale
Côte d'Ivoire

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Siddika Sultana

ESDO
Dhaka, Bangladesh

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: EHIB Communications <hhc@cdph.ca.gov>
To: "mercurypolicy@aol.com" <mercurypolicy@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 03:31:05 PM EST
Subject: Mercury Found in These Face Creams – Stop Using Immediately

CDPH
California Department of Public Health

Consumer Alert

Stop Using These Face Creams Immediately
Dangerous Levels of Mercury Found

New Face 210,000 ppm	Fresh & Clear 19,000 ppm	Super White 2,640 ppm	Fresh & White 24,000 ppm
Berry Plus 2,270 ppm	Olifair Pearls 10,800 ppm	Malika 531 ppm	Crema Despigmentante 8,030 ppm

The Health Risk of These Products

- Mercury is a dangerous chemical that can seriously harm your health.
- CDPH testing found very high levels of mercury in these products.
- Any creams with a mercury concentration over 1 part per million (ppm) are illegal.
- These creams are often sold as products to clear blemishes, smooth wrinkles, or lighten skin.

If You or Someone You Know Uses Any of These Creams, Please

- See a doctor and get a urine test for mercury.
- Seal the product in a plastic bag and take it to your local hazardous waste facility. For help with disposal, click here.
- Call or text CDPH at (510) 334-8567 or email AskEHIB@cdph.ca.gov for more information.

Learn more about other creams that contain mercury. Link Here