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Côte d'Ivoire: Stop attempt to defraud toxic waste dump victims

An attempt to defraud victims of the Trafigura toxic waste dump disaster out of \$45 million must be stopped, Amnesty International said today in an open letter.

An organization known as the National Coordination of Toxic Waste Victims of Côte d'Ivoire (CNVDT-CI) is falsely claiming to represent some 30,000 victims who brought a court case against Trafigura in the UK. The organization has applied for the \$45 million compensation owed to the victims to be transferred to its bank account.

CNVDT-CI will today appeal a decision in the Ivorian courts that blocked it from receiving the compensation awarded in the UK settlement.

In an open letter to Côte d'Ivoire's Minister of Justice, Mamadou Koné, Amnesty International said that there is no evidence that CNVDT-CI represents the 30,000 victims and described it as a "blatant attempt to perpetrate fraud".

"This is a barefaced attempt to steal from the victims of this toxic waste scandal," said Widney Brown, Senior Director, International Law and Policy at Amnesty International. "These people have suffered enough and the Cote d'Ivoire authorities must ensure that justice is done so that the claimants receive the money that is owed to them."

The \$45 million is currently subject to a freezing order and the victims have yet to receive their money.

Background

In August 2006, toxic waste was brought to Abidjan on board the ship Probo Koala, which had been chartered by oil-trading company, Trafigura.

This waste was then dumped in various locations around the city, causing a human rights tragedy. More than 100,000 people sought medical attention for a range of health problems and there were 15 reported deaths.

On 23 September 2009, the High Court of England and Wales approved a \$45 million settlement between nearly 30,000 victims of the toxic waste dumping and Trafigura.

Notes to editors:

Amnesty International's work on corporate accountability is part of its Demand Dignity campaign, which aims to end the human rights violations that drive and deepen global poverty. The campaign will mobilize people all over the world to demand that governments, big corporations and others who have power listen to the voices of those living in poverty and recognize and protect their rights. For more information visit <http://demanddignity.amnesty.org/campaigns-en/>

To see a copy of the open letter to the Minister of Justice in Côte d'Ivoire, please click [here](#).

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44
20 7413 5566 or email: press@amnesty.org

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK