

Claimant lawyers accuse Anglo of ‘shocking indifference’ to Kabwe case

 By [Lindsey Schutters](#)

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Lawyers representing the Kabwe community in the lead poisoning class action lawsuit accuse Anglo American of "shocking indifference" after the Johannesburg High Court granted leave to appeal a previous dismissal of the class action case. This decision paves the way for the case to be heard by the Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa.



Claimants in the Kabwe lead poisoning case will be escalating the ongoing dispute with Anglo American to the SCA

The lawsuit alleges that Anglo's historical mining operations in Kabwe, Zambia, are responsible for lead poisoning suffered by children and women in the community. A December 2023 ruling had dismissed the case, effectively denying the Kabwe community access to justice.

After the High Court granted leave to appeal, the case will now be escalated to the Supreme Court of Appeal.



Anglo maintains innocence as Kabwe claimants given leave to appeal

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This comes after experts representing the claimants put forth compelling arguments, asserting that the stability of lead in the environment was a well-understood phenomenon. They contend that Anglo, given this knowledge, should have foreseen and mitigated potential harm to future generations.

Adding weight to the claimants' position, international organisations such as Amnesty International and various United Nations agencies have voiced their support.

They argue that the actions of Anglo stand in violation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This development is in keeping with growing global scrutiny of corporate actions and their impact on human rights and the environment.

'Tremendous harm'

“Anglo American's arguments refuting its responsibility indicate a shocking indifference to the tremendous and ongoing harm caused to generations of the Kabwe communities by its operations,” said Richard Meeran, partner at Leigh Day, and Zanele Mbuyisa, founding partner at Mbuyisa Moleele Attorneys, in a joint statement that was shared with *Bizcommunity*.

“It is also in stark contrast to the human rights principles to which Anglo American claims to subscribe, as set out in their Group Policies.”

Anglo maintains its innocence, stating that it adhered to the industry standards of the time and could not have foreseen the long-term consequences. The company denies liability for the current situation in Kabwe.

ABOUT LINDSEY SCHUTTERS

Lindsey is the editor for ICT, Construction&Engineering and Energy&Mining at Bizcommunity

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