

# Gambia police link child deaths to cough syrup imported by US firm

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The deaths of 69 children from acute kidney injury in Gambia is linked to four cough syrups made in India and imported into the West African country by means of a US-based pharmaceutical company, the Gambian police said in a preliminary investigation report.



Source: [Rxabay](#)

World Health Organization (WHO) investigators had already found "unacceptable" levels of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol, which can be toxic, in four products made by New Delhi-based Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

The police report did not name Maiden directly but listed the company's same four products that were mentioned by the WHO: Promethazine Oral Solution, Kofexmalin Baby Cough Syrup, Makoff Baby Cough Syrup and Magrip N Cold Syrup.

Atlanta-based Atlantic Pharmaceuticals Company Ltd, which has permission to export medicines into Gambia, ordered a combined total of 50,000 bottles of those syrups, according to the police report.

"It is established that from the aforesaid sum of 50,000 bottles of contaminated baby syrups, 41,462 bottles have been quarantined/seized. and 8,538 bottles remained unaccounted for," the statement said, adding that investigations were

ongoing.

Atlantic Pharmaceuticals could not be reached for comment.

Gambian authorities launched a probe in September after doctors in July noticed that a number of children developed symptoms of kidney failure after taking a locally-sold paracetamol syrup used to treat fevers.

Kidney injuries have caused 69 child deaths, according to the government, which has suspended sales of all brands of paracetamol cough syrup and recalled it from pharmacies and households.



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The contaminated Maiden Pharma syrups have so far only been distributed in Gambia, although they may have arrived elsewhere through the informal market.

"We are all victims of the malpractice from manufacturers. As a country, we don't have all the resources and the personnel. We don't have a drug-testing laboratory," Health Minister, Ahmad Lamin Samateh said last week.

International partners will help the country tighten medicine-monitoring systems and import regulations, he added, noting that the government was taking action against manufacturers in India.

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