

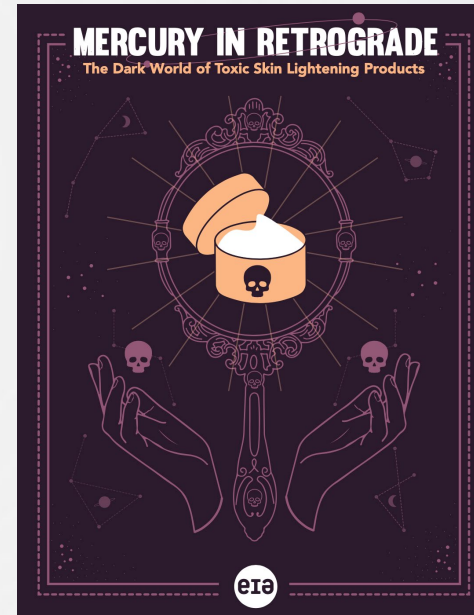


ICMGP 2024

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Mercury in Retrograde: The Dark World of Toxic Skin Lightening Products (SLPs)

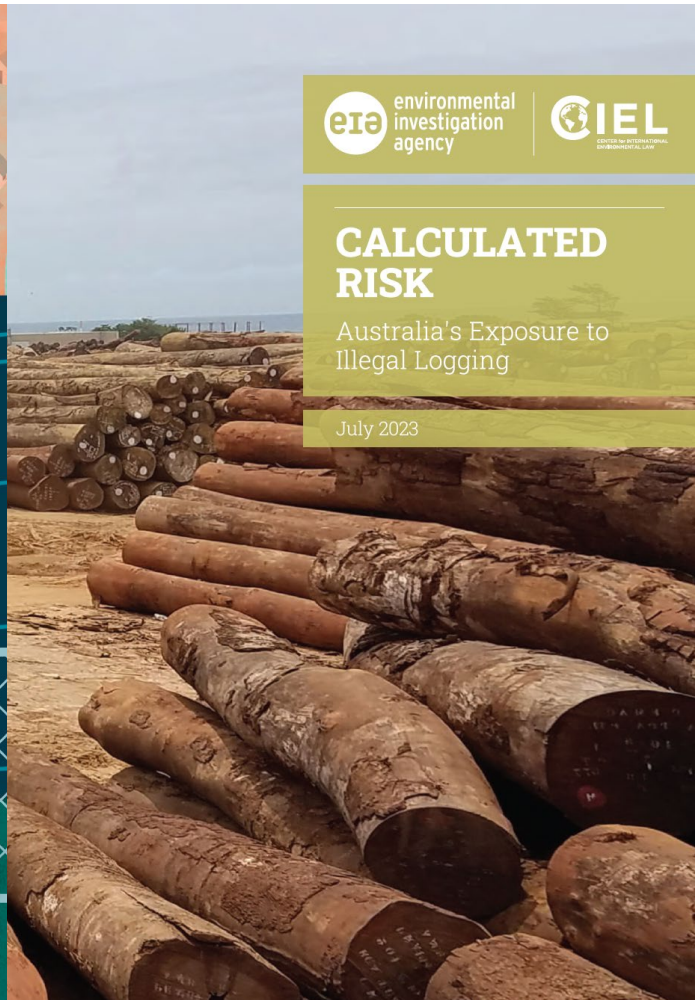
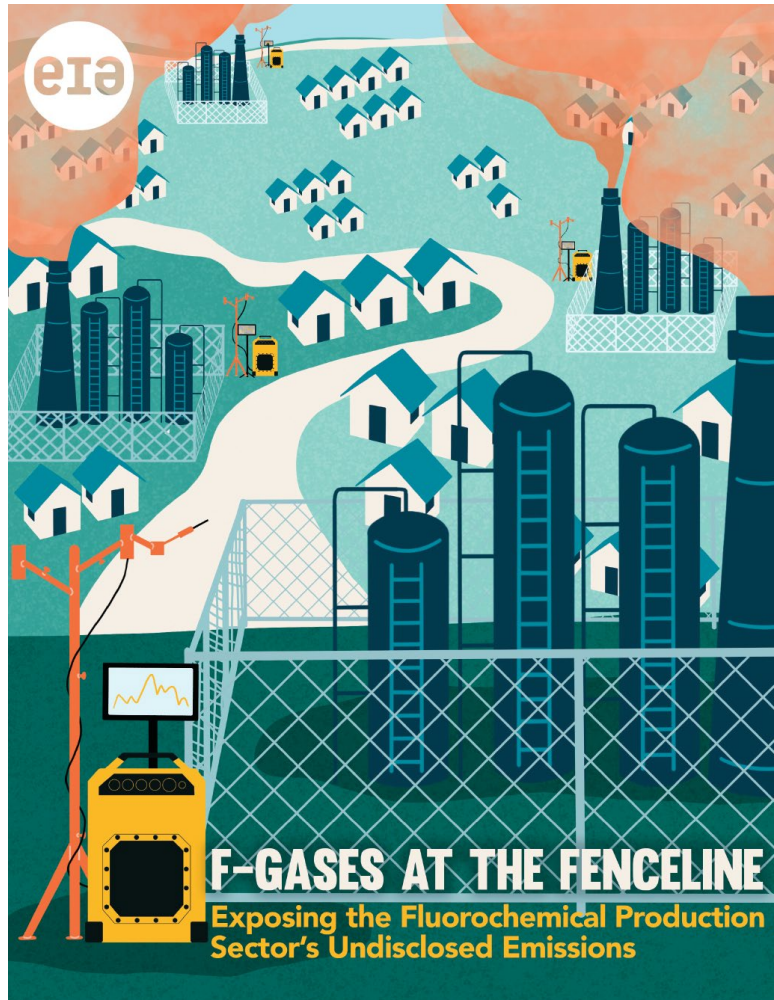
Avipsa Mahapatra



Who is

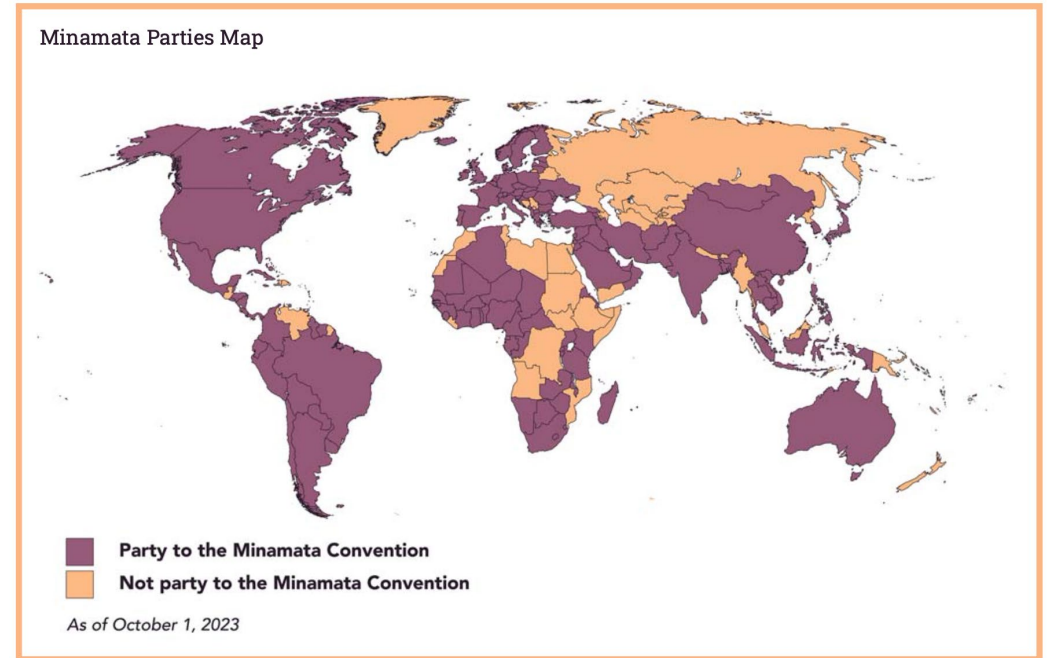


environmental investigation agency

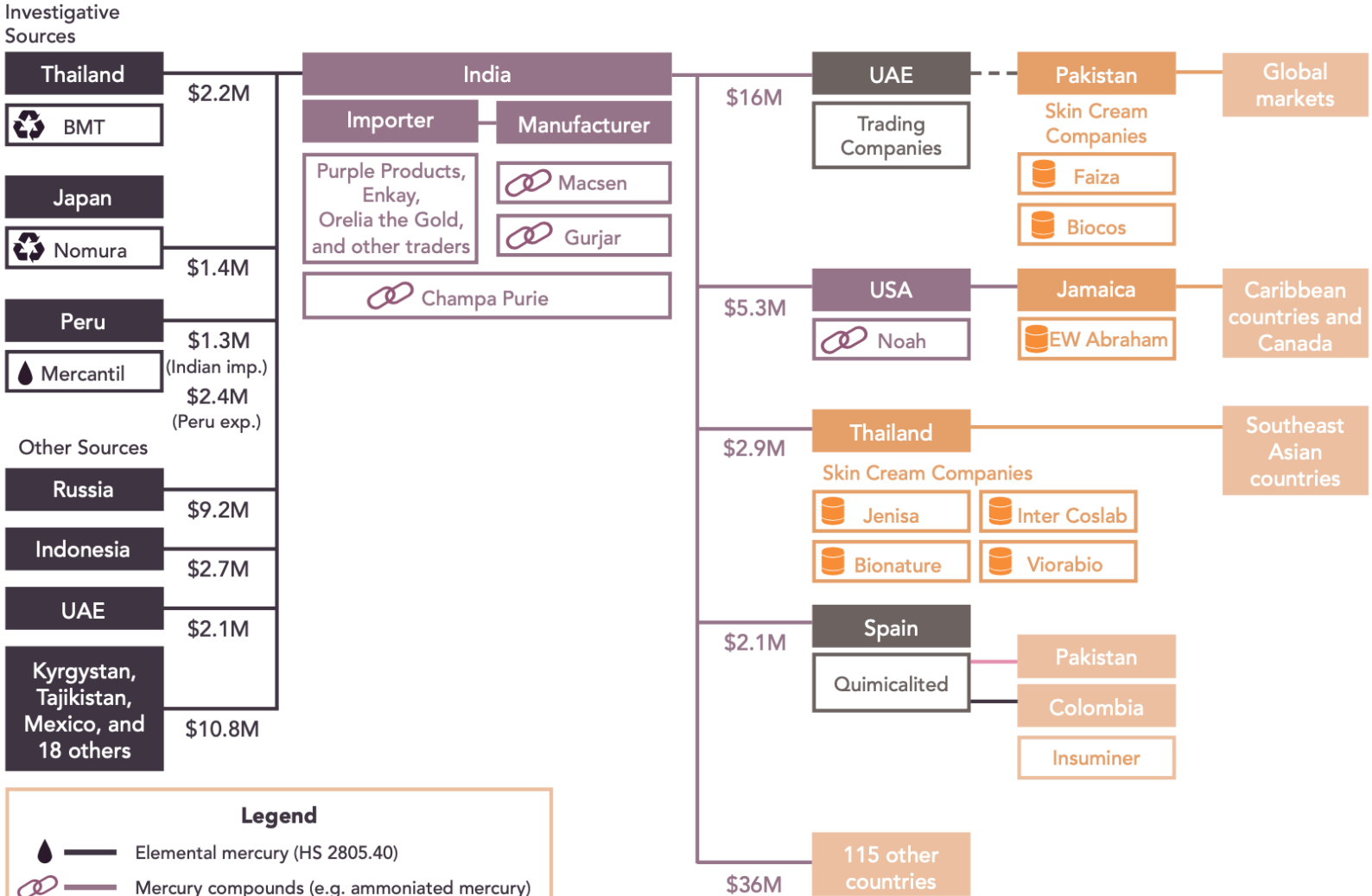


Legal Landscape

- Addition of mercury compounds into cosmetics over 1 ppm of mercury is a violation of the Minamata Convention under Article 4
 - National legislation implementing this requirement has not been adopted in all countries
- Of the SLP production countries covered in this report (Jamaica, Pakistan, and Thailand), Thailand and Pakistan have enacted national laws in compliance with the 1ppm restriction
 - Enforcement remains a key issue
- These three—and many other manufacturing countries of mercury compounds and mercury added SLPs—are all Parties to the Minamata Convention, indicating a lack of compliance and government oversight.



Global Supply Chain Diagram



Legend

- Elemental mercury (HS 2805.40)
- Mercury compounds (e.g. ammoniated mercury)
- Mercury-added skin-lightening products (SLPs)
- Thimerosal
- Link uncertain
- \$ Trade sum 2016 - 2022
- Recycler

Global supply chain for mercury compounds and mercury-added SLPs. Sources from EIA investigation.

Trade Data

Note: the scale of mercury compound production is not limited to the compound trading companies mentioned in this report



Pakistan

- Poonia Brothers (Faiza): confirmed manufacture of SLPs that contain mercury compounds, claimed to be under “acceptable limit”
 - Also confirmed Poonia currently produces creams that contain higher amounts of mercury compounds for private brands
- Biocos: claimed water-based cream, such as Goldish, requires less mercury compound than an oil-based cream to achieve the same result
 - 2.5-3% mercury compound in water-based creams
 - Up to 4-4.5% in oil-based creams
- UAE: serves as an intermediary for compound and SLP distribution
 - Faiza has manufacturing facilities in both Pakistan and Dubai to facilitate faster shipping



Jamaica

- For 60 years, the company E.W. Abrahams & Sons Ltd has openly sold a popular mercury-containing cosmetic cream in Jamaica
- The product packaging states that the product contains 3% ammoniated mercury
- Owner claims he imports the ammoniated mercury from the United States

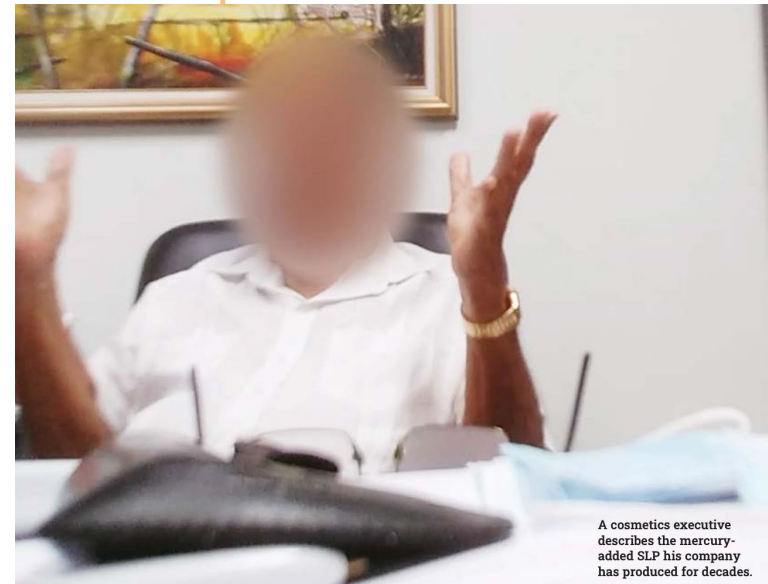
Deluxe Silken
Nadinola Cream 2.25
ounce
\$20.00 USD
In Stock
Shipping calculated at checkout.

[Add To Cart](#)

DeLuxe SILKEN Bleaching Cream For Oily or Normal Skin. Jamaican Deluxe SILKEN fades dark spots and freckles, lightens and brightens skin to a smooth radiant glow. This creamy [COUNT COUPON](#) reduces oiliness as it blends into the skin helping to combat blackheads for a



ZMWG has confirmed these products remain available for sale online.



A cosmetics executive describes the mercury-added SLP his company has produced for decades.



Thailand

- Jenisa: a small-scale local manufacturer and storefront, confirmed SLPs contained ammoniated mercury, referred to as “AM”
- Inter Coslabs: discussed a typical mercury compound percentage of 3-3.5%, said it would be possible to have concentrations up to 4%
- Bionature: owner did not worry about the police visit during EIA interview
 - Place the mercury-added creams away from the front of the shop
 - Stated that if the police were to check his products, they would pay the officers to go away
- Viorabio: showed EIA investigators a cream his company makes that contains 4% of a mercury compound



Mercury Compound Distributors

USA

- Noah Chemicals, a Texas-based company, is currently exporting mercury compounds for SLPs to E.W. Abrahams (Silken Deluxe, Jamaica)
- An also Indian compound supplier claimed Quimicalited sold ammoniated mercury to Noah Chemicals

Spain

- Quimicalited: supplies ammoniated mercury for use in the product of skin whitening products and confirmation of export of elemental mercury in the past

Mercury Compound Distributors, Cont.

India

Macsen: sell ammoniated mercury for use in skin whitening creams and frequently ships the compound under another name: amido (hg) chloride or amido (hg ii) chloride

Gurjar: produces and sells ammoniated mercury for use in [SLPs](#)

SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	LIMIT
Appearance	Fine White Powder, Odorless
Identification	Must Comply A, B & C Tests As Given In Usp
Residue On Ignition	Not More Than 0.2%
Mercurous Compounds	Not More Than 0.2%
Moisture Content	Not More Than 1.0%
Residual Solvents	Must Meet The Usp Requirement
Assay	Min 98.0% & Max 100.5%

Buy the best quality Ammoniated Mercury USP used in skin whitening creams from Macsen Laboratories.

Key Findings

- Companies intentionally add mercury compounds at concentrations greater than 1 ppm
- Ammoniated mercury is the primary mercury compound added to these creams
- The sources of mercury compound that are being sold for use in SLPs include companies based in Spain, India, Japan, and the United States



Key Findings (cont.)

- It is standard practice for SLP producers across the globe to manufacture products consisting of 3-4% of a mercury compound
- The production of these products is enabled by the unregulated trade of most mercury compounds
- The investigation identified two companies based in India, one in Spain, and one in the United States, all currently supplying mercury compounds, specifically ammoniated mercury, for use in SLPs



Policy Recommendations

- Update national laws to be consistent with the Convention
- Strengthen and ensure enforcement of the manufacturing and trade ban of mercury-added SLPs in the manufacturing countries
- Take measures to control online sales
- Control the production and trade of mercury-added compounds

CHOOSE HEALTH, AVOID SKIN LIGHTENING



Some skin lightening products have **mercury** in them and are not healthy. They are **poisonous**. Mercury cannot be seen, felt, smelled or tasted, and often the skin product ingredient list is not complete.

HEALTHY TIPS

- Know what's in your skin products
- Protect your skin with safe sunscreen
- Keep your skin moisturized and hydrated

PROTECT



YOUR BABY



When breastfeeding, your baby takes in anything that is on your skin.

YOURSELF



Mercury from skin products is absorbed through your skin.

YOUR HOME



Using these products puts mercury into the air you and your family breathe.

Image credit:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/skin/docs/gpfs.pdf>



Q + A

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Thanks to ZMWG for reviewing our report

