



Centre for Environment
Justice and Development



Poisoning for Profit: Amazon's Double Standard

Outside the U.S., the toxic trade in illegal mercury-added skin lighteners continues unabated

Nairobi-Kenya Ahead of the Minamata Convention's Pre-COP [online event](#), the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) has released a new report documenting the **ongoing availability of dangerous and often illegal mercury-added skin lightening products (SLPs) on Amazon platforms worldwide.**

Despite a recent U.S. State of California legal settlement requiring Amazon.com to enforce its prohibited product policies for toxic SLPs, ZMWG testing shows that Amazon operations across more than 23 countries, serving 100+ markets, continue to allow these products. This amounts to a double standard that disproportionately endangers consumers in the Global South.

"Global South citizens must be granted the same right to safe products as Amazon.com customers in the U.S.," said Sofia C, Chavez Arce, Director General of Casa Cem in Mexico City. "We are not second-class Amazon customers. Amazon's double standards are unacceptable."

ZMWG and its partners in the United States, France, Belgium, India, Mexico and the United Arab Emirates purchased suspect SLPs from Amazon websites earlier this year in their respective countries.

Of the 31 creams tested, 25 were found to contain mercury thousands of times higher than the 1 ppm usual legal limit set by national governments and the "zero mercury" standard set by the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

"We strongly urge Amazon to apply the same Third-Party Seller requirements that it imposes in the U.S., globally," said Michael Bender, ZMWG co-coordinator. "That means requiring testing of SLPs for mercury before they can be offered for sale and adhering to the Amazon Central Seller requirements."

Tests conducted in Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, and India show that multiple mercury added SLPs remain widely available on Amazon websites, exposing unsuspecting customers to serious risks. In contrast, only a few mercury-added SLPs were found on Amazon websites in the US and in the European Union (EU).

"The continued availability of highly toxic, non-compliant skin lightening creams on Amazon.in is a serious violation of national regulations," said Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link. "Amazon must enforce its prohibited product policies in India to prevent sales of mercury-laden products."

ZMWG asserts that Amazon platforms worldwide should voluntarily accept full legal responsibility for ensuring that all products sold comply with health, consumer and product safety laws. Anything less, they argue, contradicts Amazon's claim that it "...strives to be Earth's most customer-centric company, which includes ensuring that every product available for sale is safe."

“These findings echo the EU debate on unsafe product imports via e-commerce. The US Amazon settlement shows that platforms can be part of the solution: requiring independent testing and compliance from third-party sellers is exactly the kind of approach we want to see in the EU,” said the Raphaëlle Catte, Policy Officer at the European Environmental Bureau.

Products were tested in accredited laboratories in the EU and the US.

ZMWG is an international coalition of more than 110 public interest environmental and health non-governmental organizations from over 55 countries from around the world formed in 2005 and coordinated by the European Environmental Bureau and the Mercury Policy Project.

CEJAD is a Kenyan NGO promoting the sound management of chemicals and waste to protect human health and the environment, particularly for vulnerable populations. CEJAD is an accredited NGO to UNEP and actively advocates for eliminating toxic chemical exposure.

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For more information:

ZMWG Poisoning for Profit: Amazon’s double standard, October 2025

<https://www.zeromercury.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/ZMWG-Amazon-Double-Standard-Oct-2025-Full-Report.pdf>

US State of California Attorney General and citizen enforcers settlement with Amazon:

<https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/pre-filed%20copy%20executed%20amazon%20face%20creams%20proposed%20cj.pdf>

Amazon.com Seller Central Requirements (only in the US):

https://sellercentral.amazon.com/help/hub/reference/external/GC37KSM44NPNZED6?ref=efph_XMGGPL6LC4CVXHT_bred_GV9VZ5A7PJZQYRFF&locale=en-US

Amazon’s Blueprint for Product Safety:

<https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/policy-news-views/how-amazon-is-improving-product-safety>

The Minamata Convention on Mercury Pre-6th Conference of the Parties Online Events:

<https://minamataconvention.org/en/meetings/cop6#online-events>

ZMWG’s Skin Lightening Campaign:

<https://www.zeromercury.org/mercury-added-skin-lightening-creams-campaign/>

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