

EMBARGOED - For release 00:01 hours on Monday 17th March 2025

Parliament to hold public hearing on legacy of Cape, leading manufacturer of asbestos products

- **Asbestos the largest cause of work-related deaths in Britain, with over 5,000 per year.**
- **Hearing will “expose the role” of business that profited at expense of workers’ lives, says MP.**

A public hearing will be held in Parliament on Monday, 24 March, examining the legacy of Cape Holdings Ltd and other Cape companies, a leading manufacturer of asbestos products, now owned by Altrad.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health (APPG-OSH), which has organised the investigation, will hear evidence on the long-standing impact of asbestos, including its continued threat to the lives of workers and public health.

An expert panel of cross-Party MPs and peers hearing evidence will include a professor of palliative care, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff; a former barrister, Lord Hendy KC; former Cabinet Minister John Glen MP; and the previous general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, Baroness Frances O’Grady.

The hearing will feature expert testimonies, including from medical specialists, health and safety advisers, lawyers, and victims’ advocates. Peter Gartside, a former Director of Cape, will also give evidence.

Despite requests for attendance, Ran Oren, the Chief Executive of Altrad, parent company of Cape, and sole Director of Cape Intermediate Holdings Ltd, has declined to attend.

Ian Lavery MP, Chair of the APPG-OSH, commented:

"Asbestos continues to cause devastating harm to workers and their families. The role of Cape, who knew the dangers of their products and tried to cover their crimes, must be exposed. This hearing provides an opportunity to hear from experts and victims, and to consider the necessary steps to protect future generations."

David Ellis, Chair of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK, said:

"For far too long, victims of asbestos exposure have been ignored, and the companies responsible have evaded proper accountability, covering up the role they played in putting many thousands of people at risk. More than 400 people a month are diagnosed with these fatal cancers - companies like Cape made huge profits at the expense of their lives. Cape’s products were used in many buildings, including shops, hospitals and schools and continue to cause fatal illness to the thousands of people exposed to them."

The Victims' Forum is demanding Cape pays £10 million towards research to find a cure for mesothelioma, in recognition of the damage and deliberate cover-ups."

For further information or media inquiries, please contact:

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Notes for journalists:

- Mesothelioma is a terminal cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. Sufferers die, on average, within 12 months of onset of symptoms.
- Britain banned the use of asbestos in 1999 but many buildings still contain it, including schools, hospitals, shops, and offices.
- The hearing follows a legal case in the Supreme Court in 2019, brought by the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum ("the Forum"), in which Cape was forced to disclose documents which proved that, from the 1960s, Cape deliberately withheld evidence on the risks to life that their asbestos projects posed.
- The Forum has called for Cape to donate £10m towards mesothelioma research. Research into the disease receives much less funding compared with other forms of cancer, despite its prevalence. More info at: <https://asbestosforum.org.uk/cape-case/>
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health (APPG-OSH) has previously called for Cape to contribute £10 million towards mesothelioma research, and in 2015 published a report calling for the government to begin a comprehensive removal of asbestos from all public buildings. www.appgosh.org