

# Exploitation by Exposure

Human Rights and Toxics



Baskut Tuncak, CHE-Alaska call-in, March 27, 2019

# UN Human Rights Council: Mandate on Human Rights and “Toxics”



# Activities and priorities of the mandate

- Annual reports
  - 2015: right to information
  - 2016: rights of the child
  - 2017: good practices
  - 2018: worker rights
  - 2018: stronger global controls
  - 2019: principles on worker's rights (Sept.)
  - 2019: right to freedom from exposure (Oct.)
- Country visits
  - Kazakhstan, South Korea, Germany, United Kingdom, Denmark & Greenland, Sierra Leone, Canada (upcoming)
- Cases of alleged violations
  - Communications with States & businesses
- Priorities
  - Childhood exposure
  - Workers
  - Indigenous peoples
  - Business and human rights
  - Awareness raising



The Human Rights Narrative

# UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

## Human rights of every\* child

- Highest attainable standard of health
- Physical (bodily) integrity
- Life, survival and maximum development
- To be heard
- (Among others ...)

## Duties of every\* State

- Prevention of childhood exposure to toxics
- Child's best interests as a primary consideration in relevant laws & policies

\* Every country except the United States is a party to the CRC

# Case study: Korean Humidifier Sterilizers

The Victim of Humidifier Biocides



Ahn Seo-in (2007 May - 2008 May)

The Victim of Humidifier Biocides



Lee Shi-yeon (1970 Aug - 2015 May)





Human Rights as *Rights*

# *Rights, not privileges*

- Life
- Health, highest attainable standard of
- Clean & safe water
- Safe & nutritious food
- Adequate housing
- Child's rights to survival, health & maximum development
- Information & participation
- Freedoms of expression, association & assembly
- Safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment
- Physical (bodily) integrity
- Safe & healthy work
- Prior informed consent
- An effective remedy
- Dignity and equality, self-determination
- Non-discrimination: people in poverty, children, older persons, different genders, indigenous peoples, migrants, minorities and otherwise marginalized communities
- *Among others ...*



# What is safe, clean and healthy?

*To what extent do we  
have a right not to be  
exposed to toxics?*

Mr. Dewayne Lee Johnson, glyphosate claimant

# Case Study: London Air Pollution



# Case Study: Exports of banned pesticides



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