



The Union

International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Health solutions for the poor

UK high court rules in favour of plain tobacco packaging – a win for global public health

Edinburgh, UK, 19 May 2016 – The tobacco industry suffered another crushing defeat today after losing a UK high court battle on the standardised packaging rules due to come into force tomorrow.

Plain packs will be the same shape, size and drab brown colour, displaying graphic health warnings across 65 percent of the front and back surfaces and with written warnings down each side. Branding is banned. The new packs will appear on shelves over coming months as companies may still sell off remaining stocks. Packs of ten cigarettes were also banned as they are deemed too small to display effective health warnings.

‘The tobacco industry has fought plain packs tooth and nail because they are such a powerful tool for reducing tobacco use -- they encourage smokers to quit and discourage others from taking up the habit. This high court win has global significance because it opens the way for Commonwealth countries, which have similar legal structures to the UK, to follow suit,’ said Dr Ehsan Latif, Director of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) Department of Tobacco Control.

‘Such high impact tobacco control measures are gradually obliterating every platform the tobacco industry has to attract new smokers, both by removing opportunities for marketing through packaging and by banning products at lower price points. Governments in low and middle income countries should introduce similar bans on small packets and sales of single cigarettes, a practice which is rife -- as with the UK ban on ten-packs, this would limit young people’s access to cigarettes.’

‘The momentum is now on our side. As more and more courts around the world rule against the tobacco industry on plain packs it will become easier for other countries to join this movement. India’s recent court win has seen 85 percent graphic warnings introduced on tobacco packs.’

‘With the World Health Assembly just around the corner we hope that delegates will have tobacco control at the forefront of their minds and work to fast-track implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, as this is crucial for achieving targets under the Sustainable Development Goals.’

Plain packs were pioneered by Australia in 2012. Earlier this year the government published a [post-implementation review](#) which showed the measure had contributed to reduced rates of tobacco use.

About The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)

For nearly 100 years, The Union has drawn from the best scientific evidence and the skills, expertise and reach of its staff, consultants and membership in order to advance solutions to the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. With nearly 17,000 members and subscribers from 156 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and regional offices in Africa, the Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia. The Union's scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and operational research. For more information, please visit www.theunion.org, and www.tobaccofreeunion.org for more on The Union's tobacco control work.

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