

Big tobacco sued in Nigeria over children

by UPI

KANO, Nigeria -- Two major tobacco companies are being sued by four Nigerian states for allegedly targeting children as sales in Western countries decline.

The first case against British American Tobacco and Philip Morris began hearings in May in Lagos. Proceedings began Wednesday in Kano, another hearing begins Thursday in Gombe and the fourth is scheduled to start Monday in Oyo, a Times of London correspondent reported.

Together, Nigerian states are seeking more than \$38 billion to recover the costs of treating smoking-related illnesses, the report said.

Much of the evidence will be internal documents that came to light as part of a multibillion-dollar settlement the U.S. tobacco industry reached with state governments in the 1990s.

Nigeria bans tobacco advertising on billboards, radio and television, but has no law banning the sale of tobacco to minors.

Meanwhile, an unidentified spokesman for Philip Morris said the company and its "affiliates do not currently sell cigarettes in Nigeria."

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