

## UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL RECALL OF FORMULA

Contamination with the toxin cereulide has triggered a widespread formula recall affecting [Nestlé](#), [Danone](#), [Lactalis](#) and other manufacturers.

[130 countries are affected](#). The recalls cover infant, follow-on, pre-term and specialised formulas.

Last year formula produced by US [company ByHeart](#) was contaminated by *Clostridium botulinum*. 48 infants were reported hospitalized with life-threatening botulism.



**This is not an isolated incident. It is a systemic failure.**

## THE INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE?

Companies have blamed external suppliers, claimed no "proven causal link", and have described recalls as "voluntary" and taken "out of an abundance of caution."


### Meanwhile, the legal reckoning has begun:


- Criminal investigations and complaints in **France** into infant deaths, delayed recalls and lack of transparency.
- Police investigations in the **Czech Republic** for endangering health through harmful food.
- Civil claims for damages in **Northern Ireland (United Kingdom)**.


## CALLS TO ACTION


WHO Member States must act now

 **Independent Oversight:** Mandatory inspections of manufacturing; findings made public; enforceable sanctions; whistle-blowers protected.

 **Effective Communication:** Timely, accurate information to health workers, parents and carers. Monitoring systems with publicly available results.

 **Full Accountability:** Dedicated resourcing for low-income and emergency-affected populations. Investigate and sanction companies who delay recalls, withhold information and mislead consumers, across borders.

 **Enforce WHA Resolution 78.18** on digital marketing of breastmilk substitutes to close digital loopholes.

 **Invest in Breastfeeding Support** including enforcing workplace protections.

**Member States** must adopt a new WHA resolution in 2027 calling for full adherence to updated WHO and Codex guidance and all the above action points. **These will protect all babies - those who are breastfed and those who are fed formula.**



International Baby Food Action Network  
(IBFAN) May 2026

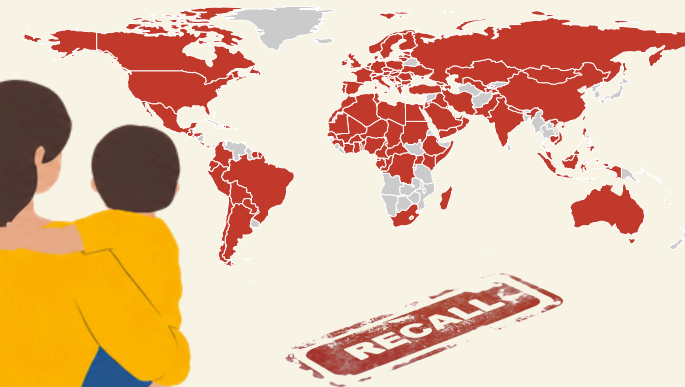
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
# THE INFANT FORMULA CRISIS

Contamination / Recalls /  
Industry Failures

**130** countries  
affected  
by recalls

What are WHO Member  
States going to do about it?



 Recall confirmed  
 No recall reported



## GUIDELINES HAVE NOT KEPT PACE

[WHO](#) and [Codex guidance](#) on manufacturing safe preparation of formula (2007, 2008) are inadequate. They do not address the emerging risks associated with new processing technologies and the ingredients that may be contaminated by spore-forming pathogens and bacterial toxins.

## A FOOD SYSTEM BUILT ON FRAGILITY

This crisis exposes the dangers of food systems that are dependent on a handful of corporations. In this case, a single ingredient was reportedly sourced from a single supplier and then distributed globally.

Cross-border online promotion has increased dependency on commercial products beyond actual need, allowing products to circulate in countries where they may not be registered and are difficult to trace.

[WHA Resolution 78.18](#) recommends that member states **prevent cross-border promotion.**

## BABIES AND FAMILIES FACE THE GREATEST RISK

In a world where the feeding of babies has become the object of commerce and trade, the consequences of system failures fall hardest on the most vulnerable.

**Contaminations** and **recalls** trigger widespread fear and anxiety in families around the world.

Families in the **Global South** and in **emergency** contexts face the most severe risks — where testing, detection, treatment and access to safe alternatives may be severely limited. These are the families most often forgotten.

**This is a start, but Codex processes take years. Urgent action is needed now.**

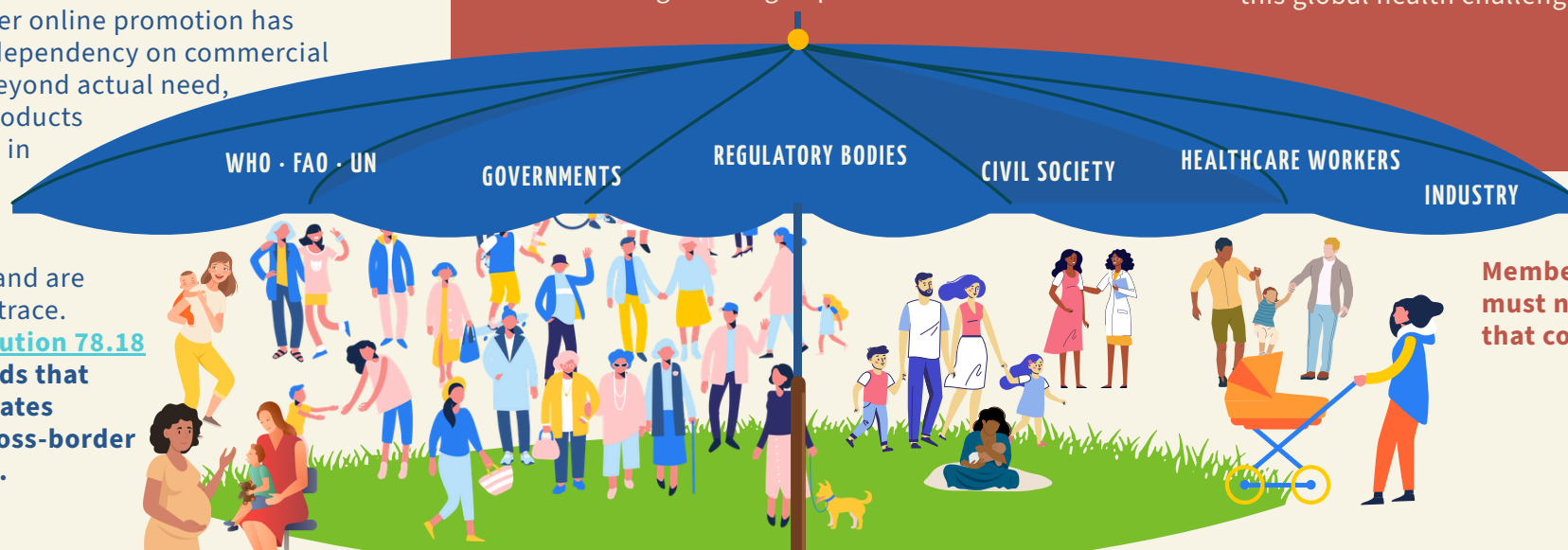
Globalised, industrialised formula production - concentrated in the hands of a few corporations and dependent on opaque supply chains - demands far greater oversight, transparency, inspection and enforcement than it currently receives.

What is needed is a twin political commitment: the will to genuinely support and enable families to breastfeed - removing the barriers, and ending the aggressive commercial promotion that undermines it. For those who use formula, the will to make that product as safe as it can be.

Despite unprecedented cuts to its budget and staffing, WHO has demonstrated its willingness to tackle this global health challenge.

## URGENT ACTION NEEDED

In **December 2025**, [Codex agreed to update](#) its guidance and [WHO and FAO](#) began updating theirs. In **February 2026**, [EFSA](#) published an urgent scientific risk assessment and defined a threshold for cereulide. [The EU implemented](#) emergency measures governing imports into the EU.



**Member States must now match that commitment.**