

Polluted Russian City Bans Gas Masks During Putin Visit

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Authorities in the Siberian city of Chelyabinsk have ordered residents not to wear gas masks during President Vladimir Putin's visit this week, when environmental activists have called for a flashmob.

Chelyabinsk is one of Russia's most polluted cities due to the heavy mining and metals industries, contributing to the city's poor air quality.

The [order](#) posted on the mayor's website is part of efforts to step up security ahead of Putin's visit to an international forum beginning Tuesday, where he is expected to meet Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Local environmental activist Vilina Slyunkina proposed wearing gas masks and a flashmob during Putin's visit in an Oct. 25 [post](#) on social media.

Slyunkina wrote that "people should walk up and down the street wearing respirators and gas

masks" to call attention to the environmental situation in Chelyabinsk. One reader [responded](#) with an offer to hand out free gas masks, UralPress.ru [reported](#).

Chelyabinsk authorities said they had not authorized any demonstrations, adding that demonstrators are prohibited by law from having anything covering their face.

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