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# Toxic Landfills in Russia at Risk of 'Catastrophic' Overflow

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**Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Toxic landfills are putting the health of 17 million Russians at risk, say worried officials.

The State Duma estimates there are almost 11,000 landfills and 40,000 garbage dumps in urban areas, protected forests and rural regions. Protests calling for the closure of garbage dumps have rocked small towns surrounding Moscow this spring, occasionally spilling into violence and in one case leading to the arrest of a local official.

"We have identified solid household waste landfill sites that are already filled to a catastrophic level in Astrakhan, Kaluga, Leningrad [and] Moscow," State Duma deputy Vladimir Burmatov told Interfax on Thursday. "This means they will imminently face a garbage collapse."

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Russia is struggling with the storage and handling of 30 billion metric tons of waste, with the problem most acute in at least 10 regions, Deputy Prosecutor General Alexander Buksman told Interfax.

The General Prosecutor's Office said its inspections have led to the closure of over 10,000 illegal landfills between 2016 and 2018.

Russia is expected to overhaul it's regional waste-handling procedures in 2019, for which it will also hold public comment sessions, according to Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Gordeyev.

The topic of waste also came up in a question on President Vladimir Putin's an annual call-in show earlier this month. He pledged to build 200 "cutting-edge" waste utilization plants by 2024.

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