The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Smog-Choked Russian City Appeals to Biden for Aid

December 16, 2020



Residents of Russia's heavily polluted industrial city of Chelyabinsk are calling on U.S. President-elect Joe Biden to help them avoid "ecological genocide."

In a video appeal, residents said Russian authorities routinely ignore their complaints that industrial emissions are getting worse every year, causing rising cases of cancer and suffocating the city in smoke.

Embed:

"They're taking away our natural right — the right to breathe clean air," Chelyabinsk environmental activist Valentina Volkova said.

Volkova told the Belsat broadcaster Tuesday that the activists have also sent a written version of the appeal to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

Residents chose Biden as the subject of the appeal in citywide polls, she said, noting that they ruled out appealing to President Vladimir Putin as a "waste of time."

In the appeal to Biden, Volkova decried plans by wealthy magnate Igor Altushkin to build a new copper processing plant, saying "it will permanently kill the city."

"As you know, there's a clear trend in the civilized world toward reducing the share of natural resources and increasing the share of alternative energy," she said. "But this process is reversed in our country."

Volkova, flanked by a handful of supporters, framed the issue as a global environmental justice initiative.

"Mr. President, we live in different countries on opposite ends of the earth, but we live on the same planet Earth under the same skies," she addressed Biden.

"It's time to jointly decide how to tackle this serious ecological threat," Volkova said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/12/16/smog-choked-russian-city-appeals-to-biden-for-aid-a72369