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Nausea, Headaches and Coughing: Locals Complain Amid Crimean Oil Refinery Fire Caused By Ukrainian Strike

By Moscow Times Reporter

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A satellite image shows fire and smoke rising from an oil depot in Feodosia, Crimea. **Planet Labs Inc.**

A major fire at an oil refinery in Russian-annexed Crimea has sparked complaints from local residents, raising concerns over safety and environmental impact.

Kyiv's forces reported a "successful strike" on an offshore oil terminal near the Black Sea port town of Feodosia on Monday, sparking a fire that prompted local authorities to evacuate over 1,000 people.

Locals have since complained of adverse symptoms amid the fire that has spread to up to 2,500 square meters as of early Wednesday, according to the government newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta.

"I felt like coughing just going past the construction site, the smoke enveloped the entire sky

and seemed to hang lower," Feodosia resident Anastasia Kuznetsova posted on the social media site VKontakte.

Some residents complained about how the fire was still not extinguished after four days of burning.

On Thursday, the Russian-appointed mayor of Feodosia, Igor Tkachenko, wrote on Telegram that "efforts to mitigate the aftermath of the emergency are ongoing."

Related article: Crimea Oil Depot Burns 3 Days After Ukraine Strike

But while local officials claimed that "no harmful substances were detected in repeated air samples," residents continue to complain about air quality.

"Nausea, headaches, coughing in the morning — was that all just a dream? Only the rain helped us today," Irina Kapeka, a resident of Feodosia, posted on Thursday in the local VKontakte group Podslushano Feodosia, referring to the authorities' assurances that the air was safe to breathe.

Another woman, Inna Radchenko, commented on VKontakte: "It's strange they [the authorities] haven't declared this air to be beneficial."

The local consumer protection watchdog also reported high levels of sulfur dioxide in an air sample taken near the flames.

The town has implemented a municipal-level state of emergency. As of Wednesday, traffic around the oil depot was restricted, with vehicles being diverted to alternate routes, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency said.

Local officials evacuated at least 1,130 people from the area.

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