

Hungarian plant still releasing toxic mud: Greenpeace

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A rescue workers stands on the reservoir wall at the Ajka Timfoldgyar plant, near Kolontar village, where a wave of toxic red mud swept through the small village in 2010. A Hungarian alumina plant that caused a massive toxic sludge spill in October, is releasing poisonous substances straight into the surrounding area, Greenpeace revealed on Tuesday.

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"The Hungarian company MAL AG is now dispersing its waste water directly into the environment," the Hungarian branch of the environmental protection organisation said in a statement.

Greenpeace said it had discovered an "illegal wastewater disposal pipe"

from the MAL plant that was delivering [red mud](#) straight into the nearby river Marcal.

Citing an analysis by the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) in Vienna, it also noted that levels of [toxic chemicals](#) like arsenic, aluminium and organic carbon in the sludge were far above legal limits -- in some cases up to 100 times higher.

"The EU Commission has to intervene with the Hungarian government immediately to stop this threat to humans, animals and nature", Greenpeace campaigner Balazs Tomori urged.

The new revelations could point to a violation of EU environmental law, the organisation added.

According to MAL, a lack of storage capacity for the new waste had caused it to disperse the toxic mud into the environment, Greenpeace said.

Ten people were killed and a state of emergency was declared last October after a breach in the retaining walls of a reservoir at the alumina plant in Ajka in western Hungary sent 1.1 million cubic metres (38.8 million cubic feet) of toxic red mud cascading into surrounding villages.

The devastation spread across an area of 40 square kilometers (over 15 square miles) in what officials called Hungary's worst-ever [chemical accident](#), but the company responsible for the devastation was allowed to resume production barely two weeks after the accident.

"It's immensely frustrating that the Hungarian government has legalised this environmental crime -- a catastrophe emergency act has been activated, which overrides environmental regulations", Tomori deplored Tuesday.

The government was not immediately available for comment.

Hungary currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

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