

# Hungary vows to start moving toxic waste from chemical plant

May 1 2015, byPablo Gorondi

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This is a handout image made available by Greenpeace dated on April 7, 2015, of corroded and leaking barrels are seen being stored on the yard of the Budapest Chemical Works in Budapest, Hungary. Greenpeace says that leaking, rusted barrels full of toxic materials stored in the open at a defunct chemicals company in Hungary could cause an environmental catastrophe. The government says it will take months before the chemicals are removed and the area can be cleaned up. (Gergely Simon/Greenpeace via AP)

Some 1,000 barrels of toxic waste will be removed quickly from a

defunct chemical company plant in Budapest, a Hungarian official said Thursday after Greenpeace described conditions at the site as "near catastrophic."

Reversing earlier official comments that it would take months before any cleanup could begin, Richard Tarnai, commissioner of the Pest County office, said immediate action was needed because of the deteriorating condition of the [hazardous material](#).

He said the rest of the estimated 2,800 tons of [hazardous waste](#) would also be taken away within months from the Budapest Chemical Works site not far from downtown.

Gergely Simon, a Greenpeace chemicals expert, said [toxic materials](#) like benzene at the site were seeping into the ground water up to 60 meters (200 feet) deep at concentrations up to 100,000 times the allowed limit. He said the condition of the barrels had deteriorated greatly in the last few years.

Zsolt V. Nemeth, state secretary for environmental protection and agricultural development, had estimated that cleansing the contaminated soil and water would take years and cost up to 10 billion forints (\$36 million).

The chemicals company was privatized a few years after the 1990 end of communism and has been under liquidation since 2007.



This file photo taken Sept. 28, 2006 shows the Budapest Chemical Works plant in Ferencvaros, 9th district of Budapest, Hungary. Greenpeace says leaking, rusted barrels full of toxic materials stored in the open at a defunct chemicals company could cause an environmental catastrophe but the Hungarian government says it will take months before the hazardous chemicals are removed and the area can be cleaned up. (Miklos Vali/MTI via AP, File)



This file photo taken Sept. 28, 2006 shows the Budapest Chemical Works plant in Ferencvaros, 9th district of Budapest, Hungary. Greenpeace says leaking, rusted barrels full of toxic materials stored in the open at a defunct chemicals company could cause an environmental catastrophe but the Hungarian government says it will take months before the hazardous chemicals are removed and the area can be cleaned up. (Miklos Vali/MTI via AP, File)

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