

# Indonesia hits back at Singapore in latest haze row

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Indonesia insisted Monday Singapore cannot take legal action against its citizens over the haze that choked Southeast Asia last year after the city-state sought to question the director of an Indonesian company.

Forest fires in Indonesia produced acrid smog that shrouded Singapore, Malaysia and other parts of the region for weeks, pushing air quality to

unhealthy levels, causing many to fall ill and disrupting air travel.

The blazes are an annual occurrence during the [dry season](#) as land is cleared using slash-and-burn methods but they were the worst for years in 2015, with Singapore particularly angered at what it said was Jakarta's failure to take action.

Tempers have frayed again after Singapore last month attempted to call in the director of an Indonesian company suspected of being linked to the haze for questioning, Singaporean media reported, citing the National Environment Agency.

The director of the firm did not turn up for the interview with Singaporean authorities despite being served with a legal notice and has since left the city-state, the reports said. The agency did not name the individual or the firm.

Singapore is seeking to take [legal action](#) under a 2014 law that allows for cross-border prosecutions but Indonesia hit back Monday at the latest move.

"We do not agree with this Singaporean idea," Husain Abdullah, spokesman for Vice President Jusuf Kalla, told AFP.

"As it happened in Indonesia, it's part of Indonesia's jurisdiction.

"If Singapore could easily try Indonesian citizens, it could be a violation of Indonesia's sovereignty."

He said that Indonesia had made substantial progress in preparing for this year's fires, with the dry season expected to begin in the coming weeks.

The 2014 law allows Singapore to levy heavy fines on local or foreign companies that contribute to unhealthy levels of haze pollution in the city-state.

Singapore has also given notices to six Indonesian-based firms, asking them to explain what they are doing to put out fires on their land.

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