

Malaysia says won't be 'garbage dump' as it returns waste

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Plastic waste from Australia is shipped back from Malaysia via Port Klang, west of Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia has sent back 150 shipping containers of plastic waste to mostly wealthier nations, with the Southeast Asian country saying

Monday it would not be the world's "garbage dump".

The region has been flooded with plastic from more developed economies such as the United States and Britain since 2018, after China—which previously boasted a massive recycling industry—ordered a halt to most imports.

Many Chinese recycling businesses moved to Malaysia after the ban took effect, leading to huge quantities of plastic being shipped in without permits and flooding [small communities](#).

Governments across the region are now sending back illegally imported plastic, and Environment Minister Yeo Bee Yin said Malaysia had returned 150 [shipping containers](#) carrying 3,737 metric tons to places including France, Britain and the United States.

Officials hope to send back another 110 containers in the near future, 60 of which came from the US, Yeo said.

Authorities "will take the necessary steps to ensure that Malaysia does not become the [garbage dump](#) of the world", she added.

The environment ministry "will continue to wage war against pollution, including [plastic waste](#)", she told reporters in the northern city of Butterworth, home to a major port from where some containers were sent back.



Environment Minister Yeo Bee Yin said Malaysia had returned 150 shipping containers of plastic waste to places including France, Britain and the US

The exporting countries and shipping lines covered the cost of returning the containers.

"We don't want to pay a single cent," the minister said.

"People dump their rubbish into your country, we are not supposed to pay them to send it back."

The containers were sent to 13 countries, with 43 returned to France, 42 to Britain, 17 to the US and 11 to Canada.

Several Southeast Asian countries have sent back unwanted waste in recent months. Indonesia has returned hundreds of containers to their countries of origin and the Philippines returned a huge shipment of garbage to Canada.

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