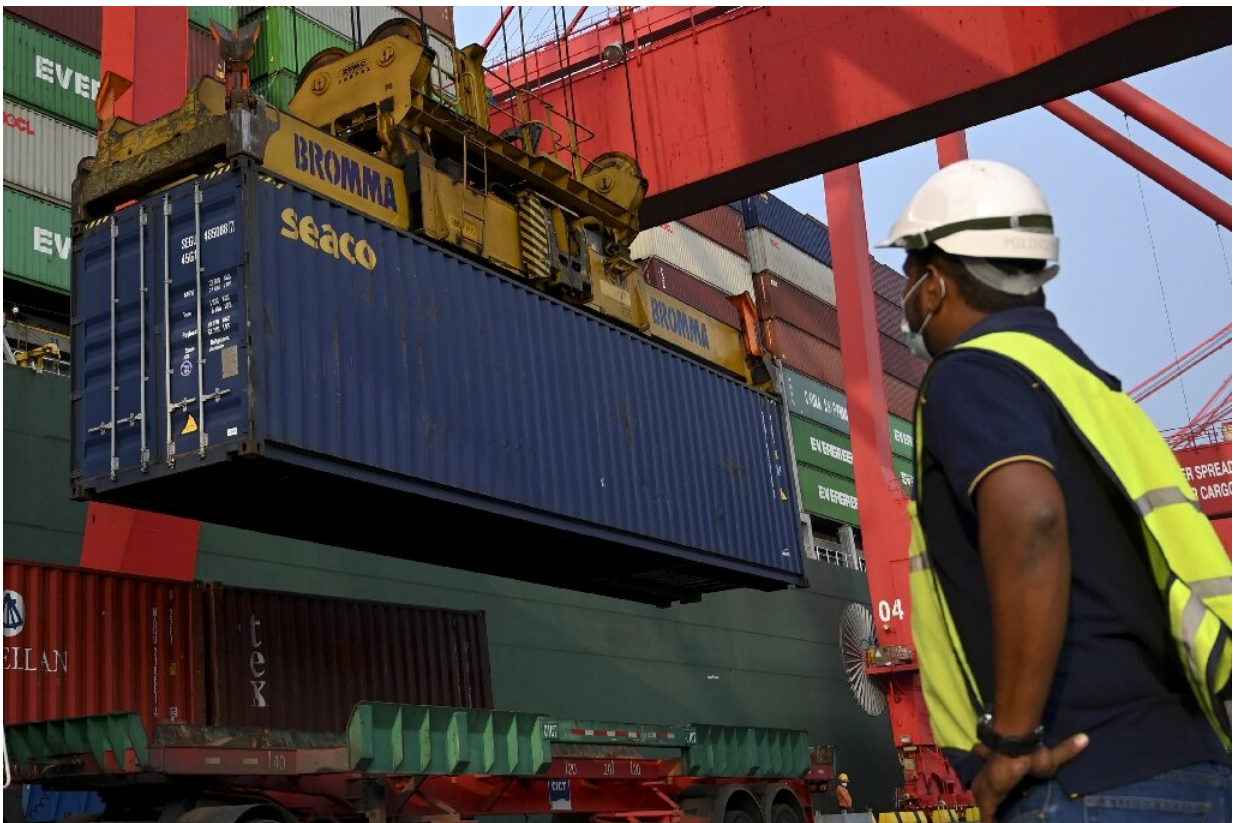


Sri Lanka returns illegal waste to Britain after court order

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Sri Lanka has started shipping 242 containers of hazardous back to Britain as more Asian countries fight against being used as the world's trash dump

Sri Lanka has started shipping 242 containers of hazardous waste, including body parts from mortuaries, back to Britain after a two year

court battle by an environment watchdog, officials said Saturday.

Several Asian countries have in recent years been pushing back against an onslaught of international refuse from wealthier nations and have started turning back the unwanted shipments of garbage as they battle against being used as the world's trash dump.

The first 20 containers of medical [waste](#), which included [body parts](#) from mortuaries, were loaded on the MV Texas Triumph on Friday and another 65 will be sent within a week, customs spokesman Sunil Jayaratne said.

"The balance will be shipped as soon as another vessel is available," Jayaratne said.

Sri Lanka's court of appeal two weeks ago ordered the repatriation of the bio-waste from hospitals and tonnes of plastic waste imported in violation of local and international shipping regulations.

The imports arrived between September 2017 and January 2018 and the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) had petitioned courts to get it rejected.

Customs did not reveal the type of waste, but officials had said it included rags, bandages and body parts from mortuaries.

In September, 260 tonnes of separate waste in another 21 containers was sent back after Britain agreed to take it back.

Local authorities discovered the new waste after the [legal action](#) was started against the 242 containers held in Colombo port and a free trade area near the capital.

Sri Lanka's customs maintained that all the containers had been brought into the country in violation of international law governing the shipment of hazardous waste, including plastics.

A Sri Lankan investigation last year into nearly 3,000 tonnes of illegally imported hazardous waste found the importer had reshipped about 180 tonnes to India and Dubai in 2017 and 2018.

Besides Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia have also returned hundreds of container-loads of refuse back to their countries of origin.

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