

# Trash fire 'emergency' chokes locals on Indonesia's Java

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Firefighters on the outskirts of Indonesia's Bandung try to extinguish a fire that has been burning for five days.

A days-long fire at a landfill in Indonesia's most populous province has been declared an emergency by local authorities as thick and putrid

smoke from the blaze chokes nearby residents, officials said Friday.

The fire at the Sarimukti [landfill](#) in Indonesia's West Java province—which serves the city of Bandung, home to 2.5 million people—has been burning since Tuesday.

At least 67 people who live near the landfill have been diagnosed with mild respiratory infections and two were hospitalized due to the effects of the toxic fire, according to a local health clinic.

The headmaster of an Islamic middle school six kilometers from the fire said students were told to stay at home because of the fumes.

"The smoke was rather thick and disrupted the study activity as well as threatened the students' safety and health," Amin Bunyamin told AFP.

"We are worried for their health because the fumes from the burning trash are different. The smoke is choking."

At least 30 fire trucks have battled to contain the fire at the 25-hectare site with no success, with authorities blaming high temperatures and strong winds for keeping it ablaze.

It forced the local government to declare a 21-day state of emergency in the area, West Java regent Hengky Kurniawan said Thursday.

Sprawling Indonesian cities on its most populated island Java lack modern waste management infrastructure to process hoards of solid trash produced each day.

Kurniawan on Thursday blamed the fire on discarded [cigarette butts](#) and called on residents not to throw them away, "especially in this drought season".

He added that authorities were not well-equipped to douse the [fire](#), so water bombs would be dropped from helicopters sent by the country's national disaster management agency on Friday.

The local official announced a temporary location for garbage collection would be set up but called on residents to manage their waste independently.

West Java governor Ridwan Kamil said Thursday that the country's geophysics agency was attempting weather modification in the area, "so hopefully we will have rain" to douse the inferno.

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