

# THE HIGH TOURIST SEASON IN THAILAND BRINGS THE MOST POLLUTION



Environmental activists have urged the Thai government to take immediate action to improve air quality, as pollution levels are expected to peak between December and February. There are multiple causes of pollution, including smoke from forest fires, vehicle emissions, and heavy industry, exacerbated by the El Niño climatic phenomenon that favors extreme temperatures.

The Clean Air Network (CAN), a group of researchers and activists, submitted a petition to the Thai government to adopt a law to limit "the pain and suffering inflicted on Thai people." The petition includes a draft law and an open letter addressed to Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, stressing the urgent need for coordinated efforts to address the issue.

According to the collective, the government agencies involved are incapable of effectively managing the problem, and there is a lack of coordination between different state services. The open letter states that state agencies are only interested in the consequences of the problem and are permanently stuck in a vicious cycle.

Earlier this year, health authorities reported that more than two million Thais consulted a doctor for health problems linked to air pollution, highlighting the situation's urgency.

## **A thick toxic cloud from December to February**

In November, the Srettha Thavisin-led Thai government is going to consider passing legislation to reduce air pollution. With the support of the cabinet, the proposed legislation is likely to pass in Parliament, according to the Clean Air Network. During the tourist season, from December to February, Bangkok and other regions are enveloped in a thick, toxic cloud of smog due to air pollution. A combination of smoke from farmers burning fields, vehicle emissions, and heavy industry contributes to the worsening air quality, which has deteriorated over the years. The authorities have vowed to take action after recording a peak in fine particles in the capital this past October.

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