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NGO: Pollution threatens health of 200m people

Environmental NGO the Blacksmith Institute has asserted that the physical well-being around 200 million people worldwide could be damaged by different forms of pollution, as the group today released a list of the 10 most contaminated areas on the globe.

"We estimate that the health of more than 200 million people is threatened," Blacksmith Institute director Richard Fuller stated as the NGO presented the findings of its most recent study, in conjunction with Geneva-based activists the Green Cross.

Among the sites listed is the River Matanza-Riachuelo that forms a natural border between Buenos Aires City and the southern part of the urban conurbation. It is estimated that around 15,000 factories and plants dump industrial waste into the waters, on the banks of which live up to 20,000 people.

The list also includes the region surrounding Chernobyl, Ukraine, where 10 million people live in an area still heavily contaminated from the catastrophic nuclear meltdown in 1986.

The Niger Delta of Nigeria, exposed to massive pollution from the petroleum industry, Zambia's Kabwe, the River Citarum close to Jakarta, Indonesia, and Ghana's enormous landfill for electronic waste in Agbogbloshe are further entries on the list, produced following a study of over 2000 polluting sites in 49 countries.