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Water & Waste - Regional

Argentina houses LatAm's most polluted place, one of the world's worst too, report says

By Juan José Lagorio - Tuesday, November 5, 2013

Argentina's [Matanza-Riachuelo](#) river basin is the most polluted place in Latin America and one of the 10 most contaminated sites in the world, Blacksmith Institute and Green Cross said in a report.

The basin is more than 60km long and houses a number of industrial clusters, including chemical manufacturers. The report said 15,000 industries are actively polluting the river, which cuts through 14 municipalities in Buenos Aires, home to some 8mn residents.

Soil on the banks of the river contained levels of zinc, lead, copper, nickel, and total chromium that were all above recommended levels, according to the report.

"It's believed that 60% of the approximately 20,000 people who reside near the river basin live in territory deemed unsuitable for human habitation, with 6% living in the basin's most unsuitable conditions," the report said.

Blacksmith Institute and Green Cross said 80% of water samples taken nearby the basin were not safe for drinking due to contamination.

The Matanza-Riachuelo authority Acumar has said it expects to clean up the river by 2016.

In the previous 2006-2007 report, La Oroya, in Peru, was Latin America's most polluted place and one of the world's most contaminated sites due to lead and other pollutants in the air and on the ground from decades of metals processing. The report said that La Oroya has made significant progress since then.

Along the Matanza-Riachuelo basin, the 2013 ranking of most polluted places in the world include: the Agbogbloshie Dumpsite, Ghana; Chernobyl, Ukraine; Citarum River and Kalimantan, in Indonesia; Dzershinsk and Norilsk, in Russia; Hazaribagh, Bangladesh; Kabwe, Zambia; and the Niger River Delta, Nigeria.

To review the full report, click [here](#)

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