



## Press release

**August 28, 2024**

### **ArcelorMittal given golden handshake, left Kazakhstan with multi-billion dollar health costs**

Kazakhstan - New research shows that world number two steelmaker and official Olympic sponsor ArcelorMittal's former Temirtau steel plant in Kazakhstan caused air pollution which contributed to the death of 3,000 people in the vicinity, and led to USD 4.2 billion in health damages over a quarter century of coal-based steel making.

The analysis (1) from the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) reveals that while ArcelorMittal owned the plant, local communities were exposed to dangerous levels of toxic air pollutants (PM2.5, NO2, SO2). This is estimated to have led to 3,000 deaths, 190 preterm births, and 2,600 cases of childhood asthma. The economic cost for Kazakh society in health-related damages from exposure to these pollutants is estimated at USD4.2 billion, highlighting the significant long-term consequences of the plant's operations while ArcelorMittal was in charge.

Temirtau makes around three million tonnes of steel through coal-based production annually. ArcelorMittal operated it from 1996 to December 2023, when it was forced out of the country by a government-arranged sale.

"ArcelorMittal's relentless pursuit of high steel production rates, coupled with its heavy reliance on coal, has polluted the air and the lives of thousands of people," said Jamie Kelly, Air Quality Analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), and author of the health impact assessment. "The result has been premature births, childhood asthma, and even deaths. The USD4.2 billion in health-related costs is a stark reminder of the heavy toll on this community, showing just how unfair it is when economic gains are put ahead of people's well-being."

Government and civil society actors have called out the company for repeated systemic failures to address health and safety problems that have led to the deaths of over 140 workers (2).

"Premature babies, asthmatic children, sick and dying relatives - these are not just numbers, but thousands of people and their tragedies. It is not right that ArcelorMittal can preside over such devastating health impacts and then just walk away. Kazakhstan is paying three times over for the pollution driven by ArcelorMittal's dirty production: people have paid with their lives; society is paying the economic cost of sickness; and the Government has paid the company a billion dollars to take over this disastrous operation," said SteelWatch Director Caroline Ashley.

"This research further tarnishes ArcelorMittal's image, which was already as black as the winter snow in Temirtau."



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Notes:

- 1) Analysis: Air quality impacts of ArcelorMittal's Temirtau steel plant in Kazakhstan from 1996 to 2023:  
<https://energyandcleanair.org/publication/air-quality-impacts-of-arcelormittals-temirtau-steel-plant-in-kazakhstan-1996-to-2023>  
To conduct this study, the authors used pollutant emissions reported by ArcelorMittal, industry-standard air dispersion and meteorological models (CALPUFF and WRF), together with peer-reviewed data on the relationship between air pollution and health outcomes. The general methodology, as well as the specific tools and data, are all widely used by scientists and governments worldwide and are based on science that has been established through academic research. A detailed description of the methodology can be found in the Methodology section in the main report.
- 2) ArcelorMittal's wrongdoings in Kazakhstan  
<https://www.bhrrc.org/it/ultime-notizie/arcelormittals-wrongdoings-in-kazakhstan/>  
And correspondence with the company via an open letter signed by international CSOs (Dec 2023)  
<https://steelwatch.org/press-releases/arcelormittal-urged-to-take-responsibility-and-compensate-families-for-systemic-failures-that-led-to-hundreds-of-worker-deaths-and-severe-injuries-at-its-kazakhstan-mines/>
- 3) ArcelorMittal exited Kazakhstan in December 2023 with a payout of USD 985 million from a state-owned direct investment fund from the sale of the Temirtau steel plant.
- 4) The Temirtau steel plant is Kazakhstan's largest integrated steel facility, producing around three million tons of steel each year (ArcelorMittal, 2023). ArcelorMittal was



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embroiled in controversy around numerous deadly accidents and environmental law violations during its ownership of the facility

(<https://www.bhrrc.org/it/ultime-notizie/kazakhstan-ngo-raises-concerns-over-deadly-accidents-at-arcelormittals-plant-in-temirtau-numerous-violations-of-environmental-legislation-incl-co-response/>).

The Kazakhstan government found that ArcelorMittal is responsible for 85 percent of pollutant emissions within the city (Republican State Institution “Committee for Environmental Regulation and Control of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan”, 2023).