

An Unseen Horror: Air Pollution is More Dangerous Than Terrorism

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, May 2, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Addressing a press conference in January 2015, Mustafa Zahir, Afghanistan's chief of the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) declared that, "Environment [sic] pollution is more dangerous than terrorism". In a nation where terrorism may seem to be a very real and present threat, Mr Zahir's comment is a confronting statement. But this doesn't make it any less true.

A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) report outlined that 90 % of the world's population is exposed to polluted air, with 6.5 million people estimated to have died in 2012 as a result. This number is over 200 times higher than the global number of deaths resulting from terrorist attacks in 2015 . Air pollution is a global disaster that can cause a range of diseases including asthma, heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer. And yet we do not live in constant fear of the air around us.



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Mustafa Zahir, Afghanistan's chief of NEPA

World Leaders Declare a ‘War on Terror’, But Not a ‘War on Pollution’...

Terrorism is successful because it causes irrational and disproportionate fear. Fear of pollution is at its current levels because our fear is not proportionate enough. Toxic particulates and biological molecules in the Earth's atmosphere not only cause death, chronic illnesses and allergies, but also harm animals, food crops and the natural and built environment. We are blind to the polluted air in cities

around the world because we're used to seeing the smog and soot that characterises every urban environment.

Inefficient vehicles, household fuel and waste burning, coal-fired power plants and industrial activities are key man-made sources of air pollution. In addition to being unsustainable practices, they also combine with dust, methane emitted by cattle, and certain types of vegetation to produce a growing crisis that needs to be addressed.

Residents of mega cities around the world, particularly in India and China, are most at risk from this global threat. In October 2015, the Times of India identified the key hotspots to be Delhi, Cairo,

Dhaka, Kolkata, Mumbai, Beijing and Shanghai. With these cities, and others like them around the world, continuing to expand, it is clear that this problem isn't going away.

Air Pollution Crisis: You Cannot Manage What You Cannot Measure...

As with all environmental issues, the collaborative efforts of government, industry and citizen groups alike is essential. Unfortunately, collaboration alone isn't enough. Gathering data, building knowledge and understanding the environmental science behind air pollution is critical. Frequent monitoring of more air quality parameters in more locations empowers citizens, industry and governments to "see" the problem at hand with irrefutable air pollution data.



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As the old truism states: "You cannot manage what you cannot measure". By measuring the problem at hand we make tangible the intangible by measuring the quality of the very air we breathe. Doing so make countries and industries more accountable and more continuously aware of the crisis facing us all. This information needs to be shared with the people affected, to help ensure their safety and involve them in developing strategies to identify and execute solutions.

While knowledge is being accumulated, more immediate action needs to be taken. As a society, we need to reduce our energy consumption while our governments work to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. Even turning off lights and electrical appliances, cycling or using public transport, using energy efficient devices, and sealing any volatile chemicals in the house or garden can, if done collaboratively, make an enormous difference.

28,328 deaths at the hands of terrorists is gruesome and upsetting. Nearly 7 million deaths as a result of global inaction and wilful ignorance is deplorable. And the numbers will only continue to rise if we don't acknowledge and address it.

This article was written by [Manoj](#) Kumar and Nicholas Dal Sasso.

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About [ECOTECH](#):

At Ecotech, problem solving is in our DNA. We have pioneered innovative solutions in environmental monitoring for over 40 years and are global leaders in the design, manufacture, operation and maintenance of air, water, gas, meteorology, blast, particulate and dust monitoring systems. We work with a broad range of industries including mining, government and processing.

Founded and headquartered in Australia, Ecotech (www.ecotech.com) has a global footprint across 80 countries, world-class manufacturing facilities certified to ISO 9001 Quality Management standard in India and Australia, and NATA accredited for compliance with ISO/IEC 17025 for a range testing and calibration services. Every day we operate and manage over 440 real-time environmental monitoring sites worldwide and employ over 220 people across Oceania and Southeast Asia. Ecotech

is part of the [ACOEM](#) Group.

About the authors:

Manoj Kumar has worked with scientific, analytical, laboratory and environmental monitoring instruments for close to 20 years. Manoj currently heads International Business Development for ECOTECH Group (www.ecotech.com) across the subcontinent, Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. Manoj was appointed a member of the Federal Ministerial Consultative Committee of Australia for the Subcontinent from Sep 2012 to Aug 2013. He was President of Cleantech Business sector at the Australia India Business Council (Victoria) from Aug 2011 to Aug 2013. Manoj holds a Bachelor of Electronic Engineering and an MBA.

Nicholas Dal Sasso started his career as a project engineer in the petroleum industry working in remote conditions in South America, gaining experience in using state of the art remote sensing equipment. After spending five years preparing the Australian-based ECOTECH Group for global expansion, in 2012 Nicholas was appointed Managing Director. In 2017 Nicholas led the successful merger of ECOTECH with French-based ACOEM Group to become part of the world's first company to position itself in the measurement, analysis and control of all types of environmental parameters. Nicholas is the Australian Industry representative on the Standards Australia committee EV-007, which deals with the measurement of ambient air quality and stationary source emissions. He holds an honours degree in Mechanical Engineering from Monash University, an MBA from Latrobe University and is a member of the Institute of Engineers Australia.

[References and high resolution images available on request.]

Raymond Lee
Ecotech Pty Ltd
+61 419 606 980
email us here

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