

To: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland

Aruba, October 26th, 2021

Topic: Violation of human rights in Aruba

Dear High Commissioner,

It is with the highest of respect that I approach you for the following.

I am a citizen of Aruba, an autonomous island of the Kingdom of the Netherlands living close to the only landfill dump of the island named Parkietenbos. My whole life I have been living in this neighborhood and therefore am a firsthand witness of the growth of this dump. The dumping ground was originally intended to be a temporary location; however, it has become the permanent location where all waste of Aruba is dumped and burned in open air, causing a permanent unhealthy and unacceptable situation for the surrounding inhabitants, including children, because of i.a. smoke and toxic gasses.

As you may know, Aruba is a first-class tourism destination with a yearly influx of around 2 million people a year compared to the Aruba population which consists out of 100.000 inhabitants. All these people produce a fast amount of liquid and solid garbage.

Solid garbage has been dumped in the Parkietenbos open landfill. Besides that, for some years the dump has reached its carrying capacity limit already, and often it is on fire expelling toxic smoke by which the neighborhood inhabitants are directly exposed to these toxic fumes. Although several official reports, including a 2018 report by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), state that the dump reached its maximum capacity and presents potential danger for the people living in the area and should be closed immediately, the local authorities are ignoring all these warnings and keep dumping Aruba's waste by extending the area in the direction of the sea i.e. causing marine pollution, mangrove and coral reef destruction, but also in the direction of the airport. For information and illustrational purposes, I attached some pictures to this letter.

Besides the landfill, there is also an open-air burner facility to dispose of medical waste and cadavers. Because of complaints the government established an incinerator to take over the role of the open air burning, but also to burn part of the dried liquid waste of the liquid waste treatment plant. However, since this waste treatment plant is not operating well, all liquid waste is transported to the incinerator where it is first dried in the open air before being burnt. It needs no explanation that

we now also suffer extreme feces stench which also leads to a plague of flies. Also, the open-air burning is continuing. All in all, we live constantly in unhealthy circumstances making the whole neighborhood sick, including our children. I was diagnosed with a rare type of cancer about five years ago after having been living continuously in the area for 41 years. I live there with my two children, and we all suffer extreme allergies and asthma.

The government is fully aware of all these issues, but besides constant promises to remediate the situation, it is not acting in any way. It seems that economic incentives are more important than the health of a small group of citizens. Even legal actions and court verdicts are being ignored and government agencies do not react on pleads for help.

Aruba, as an autonomous country of the Netherlands, is party to several international human rights treaties e.g. the UN Treaty on Civil and Political rights and the European Human Rights Treaty. These treaties oblige the governments to safeguard all human rights and, in this case, e.g. the right for life, a clean environment and health safety.

This letter is my outcry for help. So far nobody has helped me and my fellow citizens of the Parkietenbos neighborhood. As a single person it is impossible to start legal procedures against the government who uses my own tax money to hire the best legal representatives to fight me till the highest courts. I humbly ask you to please start an objective investigation and commence a serious dialogue with the government to immediately remedy this environmental disaster that is endangering people's lives.

I am off course most willing to provide you with more information.

With the highest estimation I remain,



Anouk Balentina

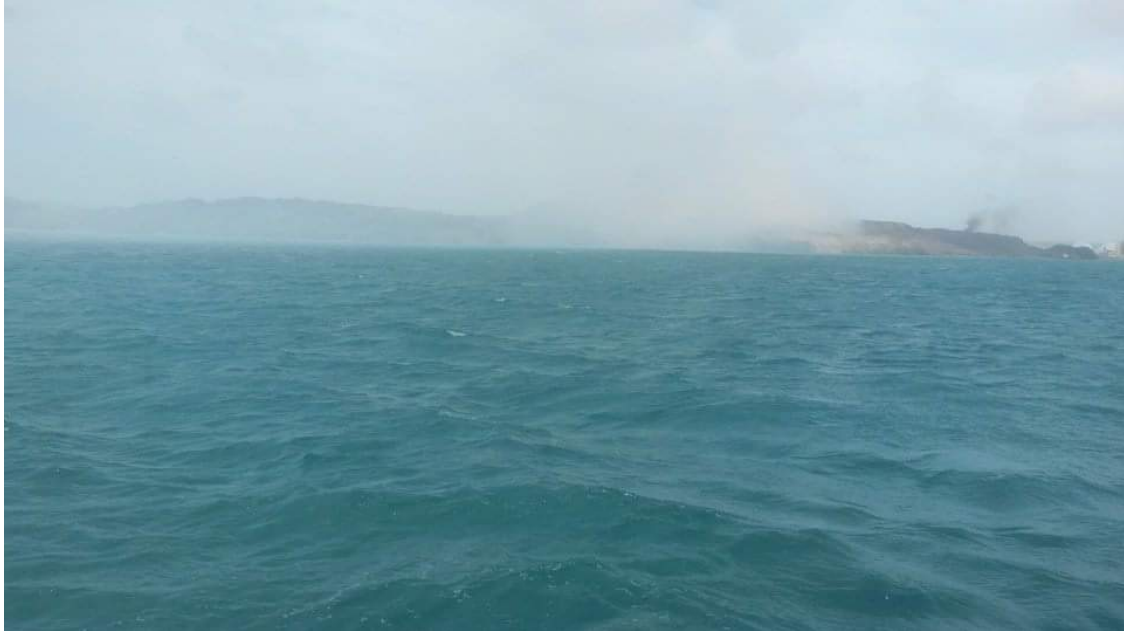
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Aruba



Picture taken in front of my home



My neighbourhood, homes constantly polluted by toxic smoke



Pollution of mangrove and reef Area Parkietenbos/Bucuti



View from my home during night time

Sea contamination



Uncontrolled dumping of all kinds of waste





View from far



Airport, danger for landing planes



Protected mangroves are dying and sea is being contaminated





The daily smoke emissions are making us sick, visit at the doctor