

Peru warns against ritual New Year effigy-burning

December 29 2015

Peru warned the public Tuesday against its popular New Year tradition of burning national hate figures in effigy, saying the smoke poses a cancer risk.

Each New Year's eve, Peruvians take delight in ritually torching dolls of their politicians, sportsmen or celebrities—but the celebrations also extend to burning tires and plastics.

A senior environmental official at the health ministry, Elmer Quichiz, issued a warning of the risk of [lung damage](#) from the [toxic smoke](#) the fires give off.

"A person who is exposed to them and inhales them ends up with cancer in the medium or long term," he was quoted as saying by the Andina news agency.

The environmental campaign group PVF has called on authorities in the capital Lima to fine people who burn effigies.

"The result of this pollution is damage to health and to our planet, which in recent years has become more evident with climate change," said its spokesman Rodolfo Rojas.

Shops in central Lima were selling New Year dolls as usual however.

Among the most popular figures for burning this year are President

Ollanta Humala and his wife Nadine Heredia.

Others include Peruvian footballer Jefferson Farfan and his girlfriend Yahaira Plasencia, a salsa singer.

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