

Public smoking ban for Ethiopia's capital

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A ban on smoking at public gatherings has been announced by the mayor of Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, according to local media reports on Wednesday.

The new law makes smoking illegal in bars, cafés, restaurants, schools, hospitals and stadiums as well as cultural and religious events, but smoking on the streets is still permitted. Tobacco advertising is also banned, according to the state-controlled Fana Radio.

"Due to tobacco, people are dying and being exposed to several health hazards," said mayor Diriba Kuma. "For these reasons, the public have the responsibility to fight [tobacco smoking](#) in public gatherings.

Offenders face a fine of 2,000 Ethiopian birr (\$92), rising to 2,500 Birr (\$116) for smokers who send children under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes for them.

Addis Ababa is applying a law passed by Ethiopia's parliament in 2014 that has so far only been implemented in the northeastern town of Mekelle, where it has been rigorously enforced with local authorities reporting a sharp decline in [tobacco consumption](#).

The law will be more difficult to apply in the large and growing capital, home to around four million people.

Tobacco use in Africa (excluding South Africa) increased by nearly 70 percent between 1990 and 2010, according to research by the American

Cancer Society.

With the number of African smokers predicted to increase by 40 percent by 2030 many [tobacco companies](#) see Africa as a growing market with fewer restrictions than in parts of Europe and North America.

Several countries, including Kenya and Niger, have introduced restrictions on smoking in public places in recent years, but enforcement of the bans is often lax.

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