

# Sri Lanka blames garbage pile-up for record dengue toll

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Sri Lanka has suffered a record 200 deaths from dengue fever this year, the health minister said Monday, blaming a garbage disposal crisis in Colombo.

Rotting garbage has been piling up in many parts of the capital since the country's main rubbish tip collapsed in April, crushing dozens of homes and killing 32 people.

With nowhere to take the trash, municipal collection has drastically slowed and led to huge piles on the streets which authorities say are encouraging mosquito-breeding.

"The situation could get worse if we don't tackle the garbage problem quickly," Health Minister Rajitha Senaratne told AFP as official figures showed 210 people had died from dengue so far this year—well over double the figure for the whole of 2016.

"It is not something my ministry can do alone but we need a collective effort."

The number of [infected people](#) in the first six months of this year was nearly 70,000 compared to about 55,000 cases for the whole of last year, official figures showed.

Military spokesman Roshan Seneviratne said troops had been deployed to help tackle the crisis, while police said they had prosecuted 454

people for illegally dumping garbage.

Stagnant water left behind after last month's flooding was also seen as contributing to the spread of dengue, a tropical disease spread by mosquitoes.

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