

9 charged over dumping toxic waste into Yangtze River

Nine people have been charged for dumping 35,000 tonnes of garbage, about 20,000 tonnes of which contaminated a section of the Yangtze River near Shanghai.

The charges were brought Friday by the people's procuratorate of Changshu City, Jiangsu Province against a local waste treatment company. The accused allegedly sold the daily garbage of Haiyan County to unqualified individuals for treatment between August and December 2016.

About 20,000 tonnes was dumped into sections of the river, while the remainder was buried untreated in other provinces, the prosecutors said.

The illegal operation was only halted last December when maritime officers in Taicang City spotted two boats dumping waste. The garbage was dumped into the upstream of two drinking water sources, prompting authorities to suspend taking water from the river for two days.

Taicang lies near the mouth of the Yangtze River, very close to Shanghai.

The Taicang government and a district government of Shanghai spent 5.9 million yuan (900,000 U.S. dollars) treating the pollution caused by the dumping.

Prosecutors said the garbage contained toxic substances. Hydroxybenzene was found to be 32,200 times over safe levels.

The ecological damage is estimated to reach 20 million yuan.