

8 Paratroopers Die in Tyva Wildfire

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A map indicating the location of the Bai-Taiginsky district of Tyva.

A day of mourning was declared in Tyva on Thursday after eight paratroopers perished while battling a raging wildfire covering 500 hectares of land in the Siberian republic.

Fourteen parachutists were dispatched Wednesday to put out the wildfire in the Bai-Taiginsky district of Tyva, the Siberian region on Russia's southern border with Mongolia.

The troops became caught by a crown fire — one that burns the canopy of a forest — and rescuers were only able to reach six of the men, RIA-Novosti reported.

The bodies of the other eight paratroopers were found during the rescue effort.

As of Thursday, there were 132 forest fires burning across Russia, covering an area of at least 2,900 hectares, according to the Federal Forestry Agency. In Tyva, there were 14 fires covering 873 hectares of forest.

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