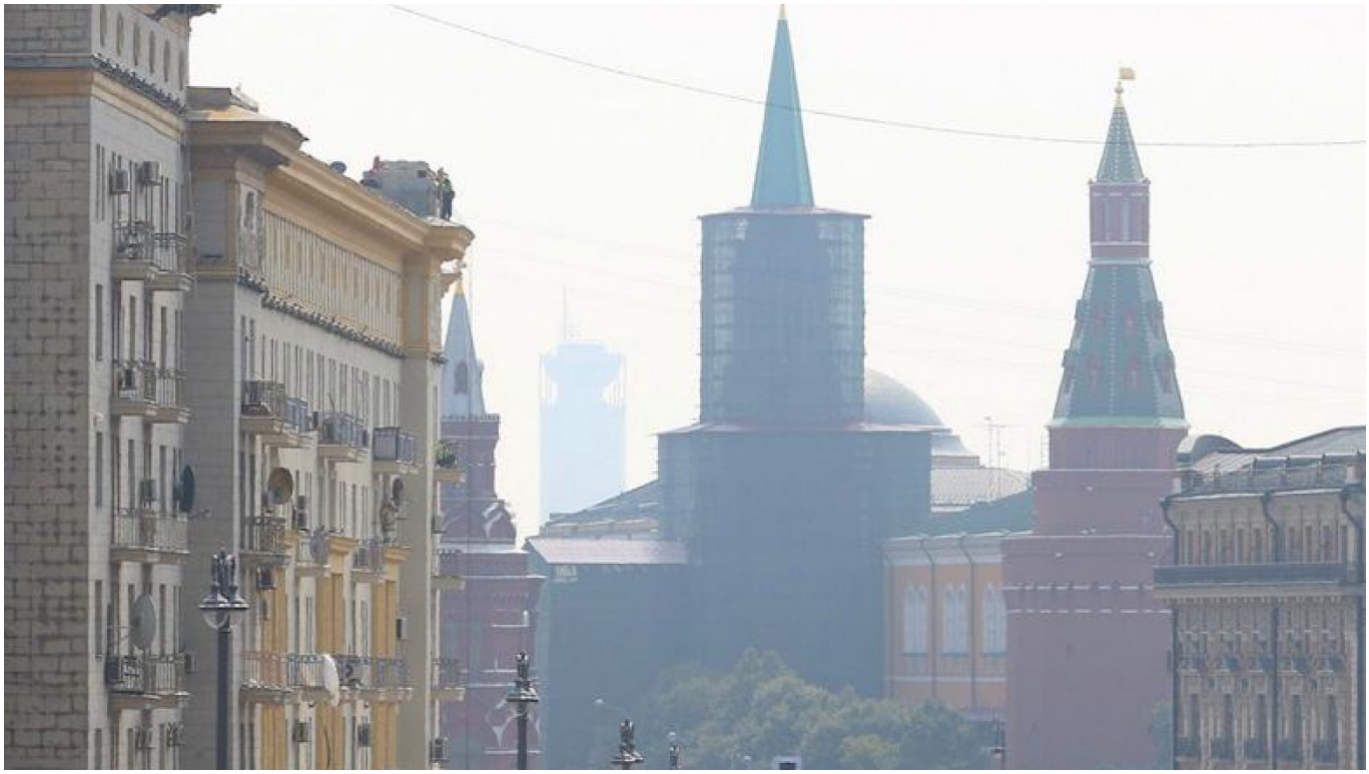
The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Heavy Moscow Smog to Linger Until Saturday

July 26, 2016



Moskva News Agency

Forecasters have predicted that heavy smog hanging over Moscow will remain until Saturday, the 360 news website reported Tuesday.

Moscow residents have reported unusually thick smog and the smell of burning for the fourth day in a row, with some complaining of ash falling from the sky.

Environmental activist group Greenpeace have claimed that the smog has been caused as a result of the ongoing forest fires in Siberia. Satellite images of the Krasnoyarsk region show smoke from the fires spreading across Russia.

Representatives from climatological organizations within Russia have said that they do not believe the Siberian fires could affect Moscow, and have instead blamed climate change.

“Fires are environmentally dangerous within a maximum radius of 400 to 500km radius, which would affect the Tver region, Vladimir, and Nizhny Novgorod,” Yury Varakina, the head of the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology told Gazeta.ru. “[Smoke from the] Siberian fires cannot reach us; that is 100 percent certain.”

Roman Vilfand, head of the Russian Hydrometerological Center, blamed global warming for the smog. “Greenhouse gases have increased,” he said. “Plus, in the first half of the year there was a significant warming of water at the equator.”

A string of rampant forest fires broke out in several Siberian regions in May.

The government has released no health warnings in relation to the smog, although some Muscovites have chosen to wear protective masks when outdoors.

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