

Wildfires Have Cost Russia \$100M in 2019, Forestry Authority Says

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Avialesookhrana / TASS

Russia's forest authority estimates that forest fires across Siberia and other regions have cost approximately 7 billion rubles (\$106 million) so far this year, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency has reported.

More than 200 fires are [burning](#) across an area of 1.1 million hectares of the country, almost 1 million of which cover remote forest areas in Russia's republic of Sakha and the Krasnoyarsk region, both in Siberia. The wildfires [exceeded](#) 3 million hectares, an area the size of Belgium, at their peak last month.

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"It's impossible to be more specific because we need to survey the areas where the fire has passed," the Federal Forestry Agency's acting chief Mikhail Klinov was [quoted](#) as saying

Wednesday.

Grigory Kuksin, the head of Greenpeace Russia's firefighting program, said the 7 billion rouble estimate doesn't account for the damage done to soil, air, wildlife and human health.

"This figure is to reassure people and doesn't reflect the full extent of the damage ... The real cost is at an exponentially greater magnitude," Kuksin told The Moscow Times.

Activists and environmentalists have decried the authorities' slow response to this summer's wildfires. In Moscow, demonstrators [rallied](#) for the Krasnoyarsk region's governor to resign after he [called](#) fighting the fires "pointless" and "economically unprofitable."

Government auditors [estimate](#) that wildfires have caused 68.9 billion rubles (\$1 billion) worth of damage over the past three years.

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