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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Wildfire Smoke Blankets Russia's Third-Largest City

April 27, 2021



Russian forecasters have warned of higher numbers of Siberian forest fires in 2021 due to hot and dry weather. **Alexander Oshchepkov / NGS.ru**

Russia's third-largest city of Novosibirsk has been blanketed by smog from dozens of nearby wildfires, with residents gasping for air and local media reporting a distinct smell of smoke in the city center.

Authorities in the Siberian city of 1.7 million on Tuesday issued a so-called "Black Sky" air quality warning, according to the local Ndn.info news website, with smoke-clearing rain not expected until early Wednesday.

Embed:

> Novosibirsk, Russia's third most populous city is under a blanket of smoke caused by wildfires in Omsk and Novosibirsk region. Residents say it's incredibly

> unpleasant to be outside, with throat and head aching after minutes spent outdoors. Pictures by Alexander Oshchepkov/NGS.ru pic.twitter.com/8n8r9eD5kn
>
> — The Siberian Times (@siberian_times) April 27, 2021

"A bloody sun rose over the city because of the smog," the outlet reported.

Photos shared by The Siberian Times showed Novosibirsk shrouded in thick sepia-toned air.

Citing global air quality ratings, Ndn.info and Siberia's Tayga.info news website said concentrations of fine particles and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere dangerously exceed the norm.

With fire season in full swing across nearly every corner of the country, Russia's fire map service shows Novosibirsk surrounded by dozens of blazes as close as 10 kilometers away.

Related article: Siberian Scientists Block 'Bombshell' Pollution Report Ahead of Elections – Reports

Earlier this year, Russian forecasters warned of higher numbers of Siberian forest fires in 2021 due to hot and dry weather. Russia has set a number of heat records in recent years.

Russian weather officials and environmentalists have linked the forest fires that have ripped across Siberia with increasing regularity in recent years to climate change and lack of funding for the forest service.

Tuesday's bad air quality alert comes nearly a month after Siberian scientists decided to classify a "bombshell" pollution report out of fear of angering voters ahead of this fall's legislative elections.

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