

Russian Wildfire Smog Turns Northern Siberian Day to Night

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Smoke from forest fires turns the sky red in the republic of Sakha's village of Chagda. Regional authorities say 164 wildfires are burning across the region. **Milena Nagovitsyna / TASS**

Heavy smog from some of the worst wildfires to ever hit northern Siberia has blocked the sunlight and turned day into night, apocalyptic footage [shared](#) by The Siberian Times on Monday shows.

The republic of Sakha, Russia's largest and coldest region also known as Yakutia, has for the past five months seen wildfires sweep through forests larger than the state of Connecticut with over a month left in Siberia's annual fire season.

Embed:

Residents saw the physical manifestation of what monitors call one of the world's [worst-ever](#) air pollution events when they personally witnessed day turn into night because of the thick smog from this season's blazes.

“It’s some kind of apocalypse today,” a voice behind the camera filming the blood-red skies says. “Scary. It’s been five minutes and it’s already dark.”

“It was bright out 30 minutes ago,” another voice says driving along an unlit dirt road. “There’s smoke and complete darkness.”

A third video filmed at 3 p.m. local time played like a scene from a sci-fi movie, with a driver stopping to film a pitch-black scene and headlights catching falling ash.

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Low visibility from the thick smoke and ash fall have prevented several fire-extinguishing planes from taking off from the Mirny airdrome, The Siberian Times reported.

Authorities attribute Sakha’s unprecedented wildfires to climate change, saying the region where temperatures reach as low as minus 60 degrees Celsius in winter is going through its hottest and driest summer in some 150 years of recorded history.

Sakha is vulnerable to wildfires due to more than 80% of its area being covered by boreal forests known as the taiga.

Smoke from the fires may also be worsening the region's Covid-19 situation by affecting people's mucous membranes, which in turn weakens their immune response, [said](#) Timofei Yefremov, deputy editor-in-chief of the Yakutia.info news website, in comments to the Dozhd broadcaster.

The regional capital Yakutsk has seen an uptick in daily coronavirus cases since the city has been covered in smoke, he added.

Original url:

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