

Wildfires Near Russia's Nuclear Research Center Spark State of Emergency

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Extinguishing fires in the Zapovednaya Mordovia nature reserve in the republic of Mordovia.

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Russian authorities have declared an interregional state of emergency as tough-to-contain forest fires threaten the country's top-secret nuclear weapons research center, Interfax [reported](#) Tuesday, citing the emergencies ministry.

Wildfires have raged in the Nizhny Novgorod region and the neighboring republic of Mordovia, both roughly 500 kilometers east of Moscow, since early August.

The fires have [reached](#) the closed city of Sarov, which has been a center for nuclear research since the Soviet era and was the site of the first Soviet atomic bomb's development.

Today, the research center makes nuclear warheads and is believed to be developing Russia's strategic missiles, including its highly touted hypersonic arsenal.

Firefighters have struggled to contain the fires due to hard-to-reach terrain, dead wood that remained after the 2010 wildfires and poor weather conditions.

Several aircraft from the Emergency Situations Ministry and Defense Ministry have been deployed to fight the fires.

The emergencies ministry told Interfax that two helicopters and a Be-200ES aircraft will be deployed to the site of the fires on Wednesday.

Russia has been hit hard by an unprecedented wildfire season fueled by historic heatwaves and drought conditions exacerbated by climate change, particularly in Siberia.

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