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Russia Named World's 3rd-Highest Carbon Emitter in History

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View of Norilsk, Russia, one of the world's most polluted cities. **Alexey V. Kurochkin (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Russia has contributed 6.9% of the world's carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions since 1850, according to a new analysis by experts at the Carbon Brief climate analytics website.

According to data from the Union of Concerned Scientists, Russia ranks fourth in the world for annual carbon emissions. But if overall emissions since the pre-Industrial period are taken into account, Russia moves to third place, behind the United States and China, Carbon Brief said.

Related article: Russia Says Its Forests Neutralize Billions of Tons of Greenhouse Gases. Scientists Have Their Doubts.

In total, Russia has emitted around 170 billion tons of CO2 in the past 170 years, Carbon Brief's analysis said.

“Historical responsibility for climate change is at the heart of debates over climate justice,” Carbon Brief wrote.

This year’s Carbon Brief analysis includes emissions from land use and forestry, two key sectors of Russia’s economy, for the first time. About one-third of Russia’s emissions are linked to these areas.

While fossil fuels and construction have been taking up an increasing share of global carbon emissions since the 1950s, land use and forestry remain large sources of emissions.

The analysis comes ahead of the COP26 climate conference, which climate scientists say will prove critical in securing commitments to keep global temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius over pre-Industrial levels and avoiding catastrophic ecological consequences.

Despite making up 10% of the world’s population, industrialized nations have contributed 39% in overall carbon emissions since 1850, Carbon Brief said. Meanwhile, developing countries are responsible for 23% of emissions while making up 42% of the global population.

Industrialized countries (the U.S., Germany, Russia, the U.K., Japan and Canada) top the Carbon Brief ranking both for annual emissions and per-capita emissions. In contrast, China, India, Brazil and Indonesia’s per-capita emissions are much lower due to their large populations but still account for high overall emissions.

Russia has yet to commit to any new major climate reforms ahead of COP26, which is due to start in three weeks. Six of the top 10 carbon emitting nations have yet to present their more ambitious climate strategies as required under the Paris Agreement.

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