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Region Outside Moscow Declares Wildfire State of Emergency

By AFP

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Wildfires in the Ryazan region. **Alexander Ryumin / TASS**

Ryazan, a Russian region to the east of Moscow, announced a state of emergency Monday after a spate of forest fires laid waste to more than 8,000 hectares (20,000 acres) of land.

Interim Governor Pavel Malkov said on Telegram the measure would facilitate mobilization of resources "to protect inhabitants and territory."

Malkov added that aerial surveillance indicated as much as 9,000 hectares of forest had been engulfed.

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Greenpeace cited satellite footage in estimating at least 11,000 hectares had been destroyed.

Local authorities responded after Moscow counterparts reacted to smoke from the fires reaching the capital.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin, who visited the affected region Monday, posted on Telegram that 8,500 people and 200 units of specialized equipment, including helicopters, would be dispatched to help extinguish the flames.

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Regional authorities had earlier indicated 900 firefighters, seven planes and 10 helicopters were up against the blaze in what Sobyanin termed a difficult to access area.

Scientists are blaming a slew of forest fires across Europe in what has been an summer of unusually high temperatures on climate change and Russia has been no exception, suffering several notably in Siberia and the country's Far East.

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