

Siberia's Irkutsk Declares Emergency as Fires Ravage Region

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Fire in the village of Vikhorevka in the Bratsk District. **Mayor of Bratsk District Alexander Dubrovin / Telegram**

Authorities in Russia's Irkutsk region [declared](#) a state of emergency on Monday after a fast-spreading fire fueled by strong winds and dry weather ripped through villages, destroying homes and injuring at least one person.

A woman was hospitalized and in critical condition after she suffered burn wounds in the Bratsk district, Irkutsk region Governor Igor Kobzev [said](#) on Telegram. The Bratsk district lies 4,700 kilometers east of Moscow and has a population of around 49,000 people.

Kobzev [announced](#) a district-wide state of emergency, with residents being evacuated to the municipal center of Vikhorevka.

“There was a man-made fire in four *dacha* cooperatives simultaneously,” the governor said. “The Bratsk district prosecutor’s office is also working in the fire zone to establish what caused the fires.”

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Regional emergency services [said](#) one of the fires, which broke out at a sawmill in the city of Bratsk, was “man-made.”

Irkutsk is among the nine regions where wildfires have been [raging](#) over the past 24 hours, according to federal authorities, which say that region-wide states of emergency have been declared in the neighboring Jewish autonomous district and the Khabarovsk region.

Russia’s wildfire season officially began in early March, with the state Hydrometeorological Center [forecasting](#) prolonged periods of “high” and “extreme” wildfire danger this year.

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