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Wildfire in Russia's Karachayevo-Cherkessia Forces Hundreds to Evacuate

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Social media

A large wildfire in the North Caucasus republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia has quickly spread over the past two days, prompting the evacuation of almost 250 people at a popular nature reserve, regional authorities said Friday.

Russian media reported that the blaze erupted in the resort town of Dombay on Wednesday, temporarily trapping groups of tourists. Eyewitness videos showed a thick plume of smoke rising into the atmosphere over the picturesque landscape.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said late Thursday that some of the stranded tourists had been evacuated. It later said 236 people including 43 children were brought to safety as of Friday morning.

"The fire engulfed 15 hectares [37 acres] of the Gonachkhir gorge... firefighters prevented the flames from reaching the village of Dombay," the ministry said Friday.

The day before, federal forest protection officials said the fire at the Teberda Nature Reserve — where Dombay is located — engulfed seven hectares (17.3 acres).

Karachayevo-Cherkessia regional head Rashid Temrezov said no one was reported injured in the blaze.

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