

Climate Change Is ‘Main Cause’ of Siberia’s Wildfires, Regional Head Says

July 20, 2021



An emergencies ministry Be-200 airplane gathers water for fighting forest fires in the republic of Sakha. **Emergencies ministry of the republic of Sakha / 14.mchs.gov.ru**

Climate change is the main factor behind the massive wildfires burning across the northern Siberian republic of Sakha, also known as Yakutia, the region’s head Aisen Nikolaev [told](#) the Yakutia 24 television channel Tuesday.

Russia’s largest, coldest region has been under a state of emergency for nearly a month due to the fast-spreading wildfires covering hundreds of thousands of hectares. Heavy smoke from hundreds of wildfires raging across the region blanketed dozens of cities, including Yakutsk, prompting authorities to issue [stay-at-home](#) orders and [halting](#) operations at the city’s airport over the weekend.

Embed:

“Obviously, there is only one reason: Global climate change,” Nikolaev was quoted by the

state-run RIA Novosti news agency as saying. “We can see how it’s getting hotter in Yakutia every year. We are living through the hottest, driest summer in the history of meteorological measurements since the end of the 19th century.”

Average June temperatures in the region surpassed 20 degrees Celsius, about 5 C above the historical average, Nikolaev said. The unusually hot temperatures were accompanied by record drought, with precipitation levels 16 times lower than normal, he said. Both factors combined have [fueled](#) the spread of the fires, regional officials have said.

Nationwide, Russia [saw](#) its second-hottest June in recorded history last month.

The rising mercury levels have contributed to floods and forest fires that have hit Siberia with increasing frequency and severity in recent years. University of Alaska scientists have [predicted](#) that Siberia, Alaska and other northern regions of the planet will continue to see more and more wildfires this century due to the accelerating climate crisis.

“Undoubtedly, these [wildfires] are a very serious challenge facing our republic, and our country in general. Yakutia makes up one-third of Russia's forests; the country should be very mindful and careful with its green lungs,” Nikolaev said.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/07/20/climate-change-is-main-cause-of-siberias-wildfires-regional-head-says-a74569>