

Chile maintains forest fire emergency

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The fires have affected 440 980 hectares and destroyed 1 987 homes. Feb. 20, 2023. | Photo: Twitter/@dipuBobadilla

Santiago de Chile, February 21 (RHC)-- Chile continues in an emergency situation according to Interior Undersecretary Manuel Monsalve. In an update on the situation, he said that 260 active forest fires have broken out and 77 are currently being fought in the south-central part of the country.

Although the emergency continues, mainly in the regions of Biobío, Ñuble and La Araucanía, the danger is more contained and far from what happened on February 4, when thousands of hectares burned, said Monsalve.

According to the National Service for Disaster Prevention and Attention (Senapred), "the fires have left 25 dead and affected 440 980 hectares. It also reported that 1,987 homes were destroyed, 7,038 people were affected, 324 were sheltered and 3 034 received medical attention."

Given the high temperatures, low humidity, and strong winds that will continue this week, favoring the spread of fire, Monsalve called on area residents to avoid risky behavior.

"The evolution of the weather indicates that the greatest risk is in the Maule and O'Higgins regions," according to Interior Minister Carolina Toha, who warned that "temperatures will not be extreme, but the risk is very high."

For his part, Housing Minister, Carlos Montes, said the Government does not rule out the possibility of intentionality in the forest fires. He said a prompt "formal investigation by the Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office" should determine this matter.

Help has arrived from several Latin American countries, such as Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina and Spain, which have sent firefighters to support the Chilean brigade in tackling the fires.

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