

Dry season fires in eastern Cuba



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By Roberto Morejon

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It was a mountainous area, Pinares de Mayarí, with rough access, which together with the prevailing drought in the area, and in the whole country, as well as the strength of the winds, made the confrontation of the fire more complex.

The specialized corps of forest rangers, firefighters, residents in mountainous areas and combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces with helicopters and other means, quickly joined the titanic effort to prevent the advance of the flames.

Everyone's concern has been to prevent the fire from approaching the Mensura-Piloto National Park, with its endemic species, and mountain dwellings.

As a precaution, vulnerable people were evacuated and others were hospitalized for smoke inhalation.

The combination of the trained units, bravely on the front line to deal with the deflagration, and the support units were deployed incessantly.

The forestry company and experts from the Ministry of Science and Environment are counting the affected plantations, including coffee and pine trees, and assessing the situation of the fauna exposed to the ignition.

This is not the only incident of this type in Holguín, as another major one damaged the area of El Prado, before being controlled 14 days later this month.

At this time of the year when there is no rainfall, the largest of the Antilles is exposed to this type of disaster.

This was the case in 2022 when 284 forest fires were reported, the best record in the last three years, but no less worrying for that reason.

A large number of these disasters are caused by negligence, unauthorized burning of grass or sugar cane, poachers and the use of vehicles without spark arresters.

Cuba's Forest Ranger Corps, with 63 years of experience, plays a crucial role in reducing such anomalies, protecting the environment and carrying out prophylactic work in communities and schools in order to conserve the forests.

Cubans continue to promote the planting of timber and fruit trees to enrich the flora, fauna and the environment, although they should further internalize preventive measures to avoid fires.

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