

Smoke blankets Bolivian skies after wildfires burn record 25 million acres



Image Credit: Red Uno

La Paz, October 9 (RHC)-- In Bolivia, new data show wildfires have burned a record 25 million acres this year, driven by hot and dry conditions due to the climate crisis.

On Tuesday, officials in Bolivia's hard-hit city of Santa Cruz advised residents to stay indoors and wear face masks in open areas, as wildfire smoke blanketed the region, triggering air quality alerts. Airline flights were delayed due to poor visibility, while school district officials canceled classes.

Valeria Vargas, an area resident and teacher at a local school, told reporters: "We have many breathing problems. This makes learning more difficult, because the students have coughs, sore throats, headaches and itchy eyes. Then it's impossible to hold in-person lessons now."

Bolivia's record wildfires come as a scientific study by the organization Forest Declaration Assessment found deforestation soared in 2023, with nearly 16 million acres of forest chopped down or burned — an area roughly the size of Ireland. That puts the world behind a target for eliminating deforestation by 2030, agreed to by 140 countries at the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow three years ago.

[SOURCE: DEMOCRACY NOW]

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