

# Alert

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## Russia – No. 27/2010

### Fires continue to rage across Central Russia

Geneva, 17 August, 2010

**1) Brief Description of the Emergency:**

Forest fires, caused by abnormally high temperatures fluctuating around 40°C, have raged in many parts of Central Russia. In some areas, these fires have turned into powerful fire fronts, erasing whole villages and city suburbs.

**2) Impact:**

Currently wildfires are raging in 22 regions. In seven, including the Moscow region, a state of emergency has been declared by the President. As of 12 August, 76 major hotbeds of fire exist. A total of 1990 houses have been burnt down, 1824 families have been left homeless, 52 lives have been lost and 472 people injured.

Out of 3745 people who have applied to authorities for aid, 3299 have received a one-time monetary support of 10 thousand roubles each (around US\$ 330). The families of those who died are to receive 1 million roubles.

Most of those who have lost their homes have found temporary shelter with relatives and neighbours or are in specially arranged public buildings such as schools, clubs, hostels and hospitals. Local authorities and the Ministry for Emergencies have provided medical aid, medicines, fire fighting appliances, water, food and clothes. Relief has also been provided by a number of public organisations and volunteers.

The Regional Development Ministry has drafted a time schedule for restoring housing for the victims. In particular, 798 houses are to be restored in the Nizhny Novgorod region, 242 houses in the Ryazan region, and 187 houses in the Lipetsk region. Most of the houses are planned to be finished by the end of October 2010.

**3) ACT Response:**

The Russian Orthodox Church has been providing aid to those left homeless. Aid has been provided by the dioceses, parishes and congregations, along with the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service, which has arranged the collection of clothes, medicines and money.

At present, the department has raised over 16 million roubles (around US\$ 525,000) and sent over 110 trucks with humanitarian aid comprising 120 tons of food, water, medicines, clothes, footwear, fire-fighting appliances and beds from Moscow to the worst-affected regions of Ryazan, Voronezh, Lipetsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Vladimir and Moscow.

Fires continue to advance, making the situation in a number of villages and cities in the Ryazan and Nizhny Novgorod regions and in the Republic of Mordovia catastrophic. The situation has been aggravated by the fact that these are traditionally agricultural and poor regions, and the fires have destroyed not only houses but also crops, the only source of subsistence for most people. Local authorities have no financial resources to provide aid, nor do church parishes have the resources, requiring them to appeal for help from outside.

**4) Planned Activities:**

The Russian Round Table at the Department for External Church Relations is in contact with the affected regions and plans to organise an emergency aid programme in the Nizhny Novgorod and Ryazan regions and in the Republic of Mordovia. These regions are the poorest among those affected and have not received help.

Initially it is planned to provide bedding, hygiene essentials and household utensils, psychosocial rehabilitation with special emphasis on supporting women and children, as well as helping school children (who start the new school year in September) with schoolbags, exercise books, school accessories and textbooks.

It is planned to follow up with rehabilitation activities with materials to restore damaged houses and preparation for winter.

The Russian Round Table (RRT) is monitoring the situation in the above-mentioned areas through its parishes and dioceses in the affected regions. The RRT plans to submit a preliminary appeal to the ACT Secretariat within the next week. ACT would be grateful for any indications of funding for this appeal from members.

**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Roshan Rajaratne, ACT Finance Officer ([rra@actalliance.org](mailto:rra@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**

**For further information please contact:**

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