



Tishman Environment
and Design Center



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The Wildfires in Turkey



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Since the 28th of July, there have been over 120 wildfires reported in the southwest region of Turkey in just a week (as of August 4th, 2021).

Turkish authorities announced that several of the fires at those areas are under control but social media, videos and live footage from the affected villages across the shows that the majority of the southwest peninsula in the country is still burning and doesn't seem to be on its way to stopping until the last tree is nothing but ashes.

In only a week, more than 250,000 hectares of forest land burnt, 2,647 buildings and 1,202 households rendered unoperational, 6,492 people forced to move away from their villages to safe zones and countless living beings suffered.



Turkey's forests are home to unique species that may not be able to live anywhere else and natural pine honey harvesting is one of a key source of income for local

communities and a natural treasure for the region. Currently because Turkey lacks equipment and resources to extinguish the fires, these aspects of our cultural and natural heritage are quickly diminishing and may vanish altogether.

Forest fires have always been a concern for wildlife and the natural ecology in that region of the Mediterranean Sea and the governments of countries located in that area have to be prepared for situations involving fires and need to be able to intervene as soon as possible. There have been wildfires happening every summer in that specific region during summer months but somehow, this situation is quite different from past summers. The reasons for these disasters are still unclear due to speculation around terrorism and recklessness, but the only thing we are sure of is that the climate crisis is making these fires impossible to control. The temperatures in those regions are around 120-130 degrees Fahrenheit, which is an all time high.





This situation makes it almost impossible to fight the fires, and unfortunately, some parts are left to burn until there is nothing left. The only way to be effective against fires in situations like this is to use airborne firefighting strategies, which requires planes and helicopters, which in turn, requires money and infrastructure.

Turkish citizens are making an extraordinary effort to help both disaster victims and firefighters. There is a campaign to create awareness and ask for help from neighboring countries. However, this situation is not only a Turkish problem. The summer wildfires are happening all around the Mediterranean coastline and other parts of the world. The past two years have proven to us that the situation is not local, it is global. The crisis is global, the warming is global, the life we lost is global.



We need solidarity, awareness and most importantly education on effective ways to respond to the

climate crisis. The amount of Carbon Dioxide emissions over the past week from the wildfires is tremendous and will stay in the atmosphere for generations. The ecological balance, vegetation and wildlife of the region will be devastated for generations and it may take many years to have a meaningful recovery.



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