



Republic of Armenia – Forest Fires in 2007

Introduction

In this short report a brief assessment of fire situation in the country is given reflecting the situation by the end of 2007.

Table 1. Fire statistics of the Republic of Armenia 1998-2007

Year	Total Number of Wildfires	Number of Forest Fires*	Forest Area Affected (ha)	No. of other Vegetation Fires	Area of Other Vegetation Affected (ha)
1998	1403	32	322.65		
1999	1162	13	68.07		
2000	1203	35	25.04		18.9
2001	1290	13	126.87		139.8
2002	1003	4	5.4		0.2
2003	974	4	0.4	133	3.52
2004	1271	2	1.5	459	12.0
2005	1124	10	20.125	280	25.35
2006	1241	10	299.5	951	34.36
2007	832	1	12.5	655	

* Note: Mainly in juniper, oak and pine forests

Wildfires in 2006-2007

One of the extreme fires happened in the summer of 2006 in Meghri region, when almost 190 ha of forest and around 80 ha of vegetation were burned. The cause is unknown. The fire conditions were determined by the extremely and unusually hot, dry and windy weather conditions during summer 2007. After the emergency call, the regional authorities mobilized the fire fighting forces to suppress the fire, which took 10 days. One person was injured. Mainly oak trees suffered from the fire.

In 2007 the only fire in the territory of the Republic of Armenia occurred in the area of Yerevan forestry territory during the summer. The territory was afforested between 2004 and 2007. The main area that was burned, however, was grass and shrub vegetation, and no harm was caused to forest cultures. The fire was responded swiftly by personnel of the forest and fire services. The economic damages were negligible.

Causes of wildfires

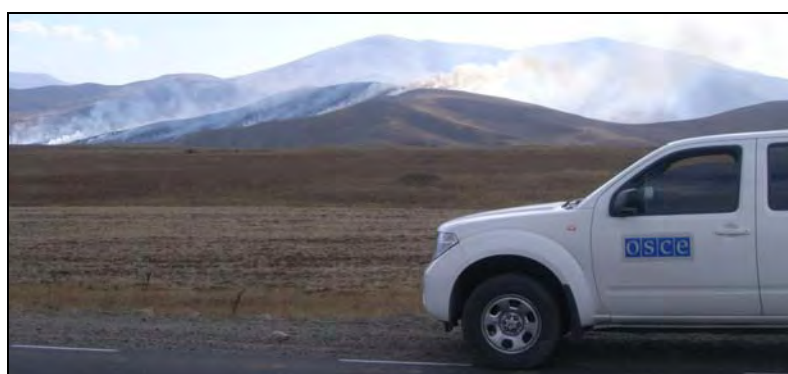
The main reasons of forest and wildfires in the territory of the Republic of Armenia are human-ignited fires, mainly fires escaping from stubble burning or burning of post-harvest residuals on croplands, or sometimes accidental ignitions.

Fire Damages

The fire damages in Armenia have been estimated for the decade 1998-2007 (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Estimation of fire damages in the Republic of Armenia 1998-2007

Year	Fire damages			
	Forest fires		Other fires	
	Arm Dram	US Dollars	Arm Dram (millions)	US Dollars
1998	1,507,246	2,843		
1999	698,736	1,318	119.4	221,930
2000	1,396,199	2,649	411.6	781,020
2001	55,652,250	101,555	108.9	198,700
2002	314,500	600	221	384,350
2003	no damage	no damage	146.7	248,645
2004	975,178	1,735	318.9	567,440
2005	15,707,375	33,491	235.2	501,500
2006	500,241,800	1,106,729	382	845,130
2007	no damage	no damage	331	945,700



Figures 1 and 2. Typical wildfires on agricultural and pasture lands in Armenia caused by crop residual and intentional pasture burning. Photos: GFMC.

Fire prevention measures in 2007

According to the “Civil Defense Action Plan 2007” of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia the regional branches of the state enterprise “Armenian Forest” (*Hayantar*), a non-profit organization, in Vayots Dzor and Lori regions of Armenia organized training in 2007 on “The suppression of fires and the organization of liquidation of their consequences”. The training was organized for the regional authorities and emergency agency employees.

Action of agencies at national, provincial and local levels

Every year *Hayantar* is preparing and distributing to its regional branches a plan of action for fire prevention and preparedness. The plan includes particularly the construction of emergency routes (roads) and maintenance / repair of the old roads, as well as the creation and maintenance of firebreaks.

The regional offices of *Hayantar* and local authorities are undertaking every year a number of activities, which include:

- Awareness raising and preparedness of the local population to the activities concerning the prevention and suppression of forest fires
- Provision of equipment and transportation, including replenishment of fuel stocks for transportation
- Preparation of rules on service, food and provision of drinking water for the supply of firefighters
- Provision of 24-hour duty in the buildings of *Hayantar* local offices and forestry units
- Organization of fire patrols in forests
- Preparation of the fire-fighting equipment and transport means for standby for quick response to a fire alert
- Forbidding the entrance of the population to the forests during the high fire-danger periods of the year

International cooperation

In 2007 there was neither assistance received from neighbor countries and other countries nor assistance provided to neighbor countries and other countries

Analysis and recommendations

At the local and provincial levels there is a need to establish separate groups in Syunik, Tavoush and Lori regions of the Republic of Armenia – the regions with the main concentration of forests – which will be fully equipped with fire-fighting equipment, transportation etc.

At the local and provincial, as well as national level there is a strong need of modern technical equipment, including fire-protection equipment, communication means and personal protective equipment (clothing), as well as transportation. Administration buildings and foresters houses are insufficiently equipped with technical and communication means.

There is a need for meetings and workshops on technical issues on national, regional and international levels. There is a need for reforestation of lands affected by the fires, joint fire research, and regional cooperation in fire, water and related environmental management.

References

- Reports and directives of the Ministry of Agriculture, State Enterprise Armenian Forest *Hayantar*
- Ministry of Territorial Administration, Emergency Service
- Ministry of Environment, and
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

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