

COMMITTEE: Young Delegates Environment

TOPIC: The Question of Deforestation

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### Introduction

An underestimated issue facing the world right now is deforestation. There are two types of deforestation, the first is the clearing of forests or stands of trees from a land which is then converted for non-forest use and the second way of deforestation, is the by fires. The former forces the animals to migrate and to risk their lives, while the latter forces the animals to escape or to be burnt alive. Although one might seem beneficial for humans, at the end of the day, it is just as damaging.

### Keywords

A wildfire, wildland fire or rural fire is an uncontrolled fire in an area of combustible vegetation occurring in rural areas

Deforestation, clearance, clearcutting or clearing is the removal of a forest or stand of trees from land which is then converted to a non-forest use.

Logging is the process of cutting trees, processing them, and moving them to a location for transport. It is the beginning of a supply chain that provides raw material for many products societies worldwide use for housing, construction, energy, and consumer paper products.

### Background Information

Logging of course, is illegal but that doesn't seem to stop many criminals. Illegal logging is the lead cause of degradation of the world's forests. It includes the harvesting, transporting, processing, buying or selling of timber in violation of national laws. Some examples include:

- a) Trees are harvested from protected areas and then traded illegally.
- b) Trees are extracted at volumes significantly higher than is permitted.
- c) Licenses to cut down trees are falsified.

This criminal activity, is sadly very popular in countries with rainforests. In Peru, illegal logging happens at a rate of approximately 80 percent. The rate is 85 percent in Myanmar and nearly 65 percent in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The other cause of deforestation, fires can be described by their origin, lightning, dry climate, volcano eruption and arson, or by their fuel, something that plays a big role in their life expectancy. There are Ground fires that are fed by subterranean roots, duff and other buried organic matter, Crawling or surface fires that are fueled by low-lying vegetation on the forest floor such as leaf and timber litter, debris, grass, and low-lying shrubbery, Ladder fires that consume material between low-level vegetation and tree canopies, such as small trees, downed logs, and vines and Crown, canopy, or aerial fires that burn suspended material at the canopy level, such as tall trees, vines, and mosses.

## Recent development and timeline of key events

### Biggest forest fires in the last century

Name	Region	Area burned (approx.)		Date	Fatalities	Buildings destroyed	Notes
		ha	acres				
2019–20 Australian bushfire season	South-east Australia	6,300,000	16,000,000	5 September 2019 – present	25	2,500+	
2019 Canary Islands wildfires	Gran Canaria, Tenerife and Lanzarote	10,000	25,000	10 August 2019 – 25 August 2019			
2019 Siberia wildfires	Siberia	3,000,000	7,400,000	Juli 2019 – September 2019	2		
2019 Alberta wildfires	Northern and Central Alberta, Canada	883,414	2,182,960	1 March 2019 – 23 December 2019	0	16	
2019 Amazon rainforest	Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru	906,000	2,240,000	January 2019 –	2		

Name	Region	Area burned (approx.)		Date	Fatalities	Buildings destroyed	Notes
		ha	acres				
wildfires				ongoing			
2018 Camp Fire	Northern California	62,053	153,340	8 November 2018 – 25 November 2018	85	18,804	
2018 British Columbia wildfires	British Columbia, Canada	1,351,314	3,339,170	15 August 2018 – 7 September 2018	0	50	
2018 Mendocino Complex Fire	Northern California	185,800	459,000	27 July 2018 – 7 November 2018	1	280	
2018 Attica wildfires	Attica, Greece	unknown	unknown	23 July 2018 – 26 July 2018	102		2018 European heat wave
2018 Sweden wildfires	Sweden	25,000	62,000	May – August 2018	0	unknown	2018 European heat wave
2018 Russian wildfires	Amur Oblast, Russia	321,255	793,840	May 2018 – July 2018	unknown	unknown	
2018 California wildfires	California	766,439	1,893,910	18 February 2018 – 7 December 2018	103	22,751	
2017–18 Thomas Fire	Southern California	114,078	281,890	4 December 2017 – 12 January 2018	2	1,063	
2017 British	British Columbia, Canada	1,216,05	3,004,930	7 July 2017 – 15	0	305	

Name	Region	Area burned (approx.)		Date	Fatalities	Buildings destroyed	Notes
		ha	acres				
Columbia wildfires		3		September 2017			
June 2017 Portugal wildfires	Portugal	44,969	111,120	17–24 June 2017	66		
2016 Fort McMurray wildfire	Alberta, Canada	589,552	1,456,810	1 May 2016 – 2 August 2017	0		
2015 Russian wildfires	Russia, Inner Mongolia, China	1,100,000	2,700,000	mid April 2015	33	1440+	
2014 Northwest Territories fires	Northwest Territories, Canada	3,500,000	8,600,000	Summer 2014	unknown	unknown	
2013 Rim Fire	Sierra Nevada, California	104,100	257,000	17 August 2013 – 4 November 2014	0	112	
2011 Richardson Backcountry Fire	Alberta, Canada	705,075	1,742,280	15 May 2011 – September 2011	0		
2010 Bolivia forest fires	Bolivia	1,500,000	3,700,000	15 August 2010 – present	0		
2010 Russian wildfires	Russia	300,000	740,000	late July 2010 – early September 2010	54	2,000	

Note: Burned area and position in the list are subject to change.

## Relevant treaties

- U.N. Agreement to protect world's forests

### Previous attempts to solve this issue

There have been numerous of attempts to solve deforestation, some of which include:

- Guarding rainforests
- Finding and suing illegal loggers
- Reforestations
- Creation of controlled tree farms for paper
- Paper recycling factories

### Possible solutions

- Creation of U.N. branch to protect rainforests
- By verifying paper distributors with whether or not their product is from controlled farms or from rainforests, so that people know that by purchasing the verified ones, they do not economically support criminals
- Reforestation at an even larger scale
- By supporting recycling
- Sensitise people and educate the youth about these problems

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