

Burning peat bogs add to global warning

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Peat bogs set on fire to clean rainforests in Indonesia are releasing up to a seventh of the world's total fossil fuel emissions in a single year.

Susan Page, of Leicester University in England, said an area the size of Belgium has been cleared and burned in the past eight years, the Daily Telegraph reported Saturday.

Tropical peatlands are one of the largest stores of carbon on Earth and burning them is contributing massively to global warming, Page told a Royal Geographical Society's annual international conference in London Friday.

Once lit, the peat bogs are hard to extinguish.

"This situation will only worsen. Although human-activated burning rates have slowed in the last three years, the cleared areas are easily ignited during droughts," said Page. "These occur naturally every three to seven years and will continue to make the problem worse for years to come."

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