Agricultural fires in central Africa light up in Suomi NPP satellite image

26 June 2020

In Angola, the Global Forest Watch website (using data from the VIIRS instrument on the Suomi NPP satellite) had 61,661 alerts for fires for the past week (June 18—June 25). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo there are 102,738 VIIRS alerts for fire for that same period.

"Slash and burn" agriculture is practiced most often in regions including parts of Africa, northern South America, and Southeast Asia, where an abundance of grasslands and rainforests are found. While fire helps enhance crops and grasses for pasture, the fires also produce smoke that degrades air quality. The smoke released by any type of fire (forest, brush, crop, structure, tires, waste or wood burning) is a mixture of particles and chemicals produced by incomplete burning of carbon-containing materials. All smoke contains carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and particulate matter or soot and is hazardous to breathe.

Provided by NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center