

Dust storms frequently occur over places like northern Africa and southwest Asia all year round. Extensive dust clouds were observed from space over Iraq, Syria, and Kuwait, as well as over the Persian Gulf on August 7, 2005 (top panel). The corresponding intensity of the dust plume is also depicted using a unitless quantity called 'optical thickness' (bottom panel). The higher the dust optical thickness, the more dust is in the atmosphere. (Data from the MODIS instrument on the Aqua satellite.)

