

# Ibiza battles biggest wildfire in its history

May 27 2011

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Members of the Military Emergency Unit (UME) try to extinguish a fire at the Serra de Monar in Sant Joan de Lebritja on the Spanish island of Ibiza on May 26. Firefighters fought on the ground and by air Friday on the third day of a battle against the biggest wildfire in the history of Spain's holiday island of Ibiza, authorities said.

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After fire crews attacked the flames, helped by increased humidity and calmer winds, the blaze was "much more stable" although it is not yet under control, said the interior minister of the regional government of the [Balearic Islands](#), Pilar Costa.

He told a news conference Friday evening he was "moderately

optimistic" that the fire would be "slowly stabilised."

He said 1,440 hectares (3,500 acres) of vegetation had been affected in the brushfire, which broke out near the town of Sant Joan de Labritja in the north of the [Mediterranean island](#).

About 500 [firefighters](#) fought the blaze on Friday, deploying seven helicopters and about a dozen planes.

As a safety measure, the island authorities have now evacuated some 300 people including 200 guests relocated from the Paradise Beach hotel in the northeastern resort of Portinatx, it said.

A power cut blacked out 1,800 homes during the night, but electricity had been restored to all but 300 by mid-morning.

Police said they detained a 50-year-old Spanish national of Argentine origin Thursday on suspicion of starting the fire accidentally with a smoker he was using on a [beehive](#).

He faced charges of negligence. "A spark fell at the moment that the fire started," a police spokesman said.

Beekeepers use smokers to pacify bees and protect themselves from getting stung.

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