

# Spain wildfire triggers more evacuations

June 30 2019

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Spanish authorities ordered the evacuation Sunday of around 40 people and closed four roads as a raging wildfire advanced in the centre of the country amid scorching temperatures.

Police ordered residents to flee their homes outside the town of Villa del Prado some 65 kilometres (40 miles) southwest of Madrid as a precaution because of the approach of the flames, emergency services said. The locals were put up in a sports centre.

Officials evacuated residents from around 40 homes in the nearby town of Cadalso de los Vidrios at dawn but they were allowed to return home in the afternoon.

Local officials on Saturday evacuated some 200 people from a campsite in the town.

About 500 firefighters and soldiers backed by 14 water-dropping aircraft were battling the wildfire that started Friday evening in the central town of Almorox.

Firefighters said that temperatures approaching 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit), low humidity, and high winds which frequently changed direction were making it hard to put out the blaze.

"I would like to say that the fire will be brought under control today but everything indicates that it will be impossible," the president of the regional government of Madrid, Pedro Rollan, told reporters.

Officials said another blaze near the city of Toledo some 60 kilometres away which forced the evacuation of 22 residents had been brought under control on Sunday.

Meanwhile, a major blaze in the northeastern region of Catalonia "could be controlled by this evening," the regional government said in a statement, adding that it would "take days" to fully extinguish it.

The fires come as Europe is hit by a major heatwave, with temperatures

in some parts of France reaching record highs.

Meteorologists blame a blast of hot air from northern Africa for scorching temperatures early in the European summer, but the heatwave is forecast to die down from Sunday.

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Citation: Spain wildfire triggers more evacuations (2019, June 30) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-06-spain-wildfire-triggers-evacuations.html>

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