

Firefighters battle new blazes in California

October 31 2019



Residents speak with a firefighter in the glow of the the Hillside Fire in the North Park neighborhood of San Bernardino, California

Firefighters battled new wildfires on Thursday in California including a fierce blaze in the city of San Bernardino that forced some residents to flee their homes overnight.

The Hillside fire broke out after midnight in San Bernardino, a city of more than 200,000 people some 60 miles (100 kilometers) east of Los Angeles, the San Bernardino County Fire Department said.

Nearly 500 homes were ordered evacuated as the fire, fueled by [wind gusts](#) of up to 60 miles per hour (100 kilometers per hour), raced into northern neighborhoods of California's 17th-largest city.

More than 350 firefighters backed by water-dropping helicopters were attacking the inferno, which has consumed some 200 acres (80 hectares), the fire department said.

In northern California, firefighters reported making progress against the massive Kincadee fire, which has ravaged the Sonoma County wine region.

And in southern California, an extreme "red flag" fire risk warning remained in place for Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

More than 700 firefighters were battling a blaze on Thursday known as the Easy fire which had threatened the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on Wednesday.

Helicopters dumped water throughout the day on the burning brush surrounding the hilltop presidential library in Simi Valley.



Firefighters battle wind-whipped flames engulfing multiple homes during the Hillside Fire in the North Park neighborhood of San Bernardino, California

By evening, the fire had spared the building, though authorities warned the situation could quickly change because of the fierce winds that can spread embers for miles.

"We are still not through this," Ventura County Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen told reporters. "We have another 24 hours of significant weather conditions, and a lot of threats."

The Ventura County Fire Department said the Easy fire has burned 1,723 acres (697 hectares) and has been 10 percent contained as of Thursday morning.

It has forced the mandatory evacuation of some 30,000 people.

In Sonoma County, firefighters said the Kincadee fire, which has destroyed nearly 300 homes and other properties, including several wineries, and burned more than 76,825 acres (31,000 hectares) has been 60 percent contained.

A mandatory evacuation order was lifted allowing tens of thousands of residents to return to their homes.



This image taken by NASA astronaut Andrew Morgan aboard the International Space Station shows smoke from the Kincadee Fire in Sonoma County, northern California

California Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a statewide emergency because of the fires and the state's largest utility, Pacific Gas and Electric, has been imposing rolling blackouts in the northern and central parts of the state in a bid to reduce the [fire](#) risk.

Other utilities in the southern part of the state have also shut off power to customers.

The wildfires come as California is still reeling from the aftermath of the most destructive wildfire in state history—the Camp Fire, which destroyed the town of Paradise and killed 86 people last year.

Similar blazes in northern California, including in the Napa and Sonoma wine regions, killed 44 people in 2017 and destroyed thousands of structures.

Remarkably, there have been no fatalities linked to this year's fires.

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