

# Wildfire burns homes in Southern California desert town

June 29 2020

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This Sunday, June 28, 2020 photo provided by El Centro Fire Department shows a wildfire burning through an section of Niland, Calif. A wind-driven wildfire has destroyed about 20 homes and forced evacuations as it tore through the rural town of Niland in the Southern California desert near the Salton Sea. (Battalion Chief Joseph Bernal/El Centro Fire Department via AP)

A wind-driven wildfire destroyed homes and forced evacuations as it tore through a rural Southern California desert town near the Salton Sea, authorities said Monday.

The fire erupted Sunday evening in Niland, a small and poor agricultural community about 100 miles (160 kilometers) from San Diego.

Damage was still being assessed but the current estimate was 20 homes destroyed and about 130 people displaced, said Linsey Dale, a spokeswoman for Imperial County.

The American Red Cross Southern California Southern California Region said it was working to provide shelter.

"It's very devastating in that area right now," Dale said.

Niland, population about 1,000, is located at the north end of an agricultural region that stretches south to the U.S.-Mexico border.

The fire was pushed by strong winds, forcing evacuation of the entire township.

Every local fire truck and firefighting team responded and firefighting help also came from elsewhere.

The fire is the latest blow to California's Imperial County, which has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

More than 500 patients have been moved to hospitals in other counties over the past five weeks to relieve strain on the county's healthcare system.



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