

Greece fires under control as reconstruction begins

August 13 2021



Rain and falling temperatures helped the fire-dousing effort, but crews remain on alert for possible flare-ups.

Fires burning for over a week that caused Greece's worst ecological disaster in decades were finally placed under control Friday, the fire

department said.

"As of yesterday, there is no major active front, just scattered pockets," a [fire](#) department spokesman told AFP.

Rain and falling temperatures helped the fire-dousing effort, but crews remain on alert for possible flare-ups in hard-to-access ravines on the island of Evia and in the region of Arcadia in the Peloponnese, the spokesman said.

But with [high winds](#) forecast for the weekend, the bulk of a huge multinational force that assisted Greek firefighters this week remains in place, civil protection spokesman Spyros Georgiou said.

"They are helping to monitor the perimeters of burned areas in Evia and Arcadia, which are many kilometres (miles) long," he said.

"Many of them are actually requesting to remain," Georgiou said.

Hundreds of homes and many businesses have been destroyed in Evia, Arcadia and the outskirts of Athens in the prolonged fire wave that struck Greece from late July and intensified last week, during the worst heatwave in decades.

Greece is just one of a number of countries in the Mediterranean region that have been hit by a savage fire season.



Heatwaves have become more likely due to climate change, scientists say.

Heatwaves have become more likely due to climate change, scientists say. As global temperatures rise over time, heatwaves are predicted to become more frequent and intense, and their impacts more widespread.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Thursday described the infernos as Greece's "greatest ecological disaster in decades".

He pledged hundreds of millions of euros in reconstruction, reforestation and flood prevention works.

"(Recovery funds) will begin to be disbursed in a few days... and they

will be greater than ever before, to all those affected," the [prime minister](#) told a news conference Thursday.

The government has come under withering criticism from locals in stricken areas whose income from [agricultural products](#) and tourism has been wiped out.

There have been growing calls for the resignation of top public safety officials who as recently as June had insisted that the country was well-prepared.

Mitsotakis on Thursday said the country had battled some 600 blazes in a week, some of them "mega fires".

But he admitted: "It seemed that this particular phenomenon exceeded our capabilities and the preparations put in place."

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Citation: Greece fires under control as reconstruction begins (2021, August 13) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-08-greece-reconstruction.html>

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