

# Greece evacuates Athens suburb under wildfire threat

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The fire led to the evacuation of five neighbourhoods south of Athens.

A wildfire whipped by gale-force winds blazed through vegetation in a southern suburb of Athens on Saturday, the fire brigade said, forcing residents to evacuate and damaging about 20 properties.

The Greek Civil Protection agency issued an emergency appeal via SMS for people to leave Ano Voula as the flames reached homes.

Officials reported no casualties but four more neighbourhoods were evacuated as the wind changed direction and drove the fire front towards the town of Vari, Grigoris Konstantelos, the mayor of Voula, told Skai TV.

Konstantelos said around 20 houses were damaged.

Six water-bombing aircrafts, three helicopters and municipal water tankers supported dozens of firefighters with 20 fire engines.

"The situation is very difficult and the wind does not help," said Giannis Konstantatos, mayor of Ellinikon-Argiroupoli, a neighbouring municipality.

"The atmosphere is suffocating, we have difficulty breathing," he told Athens News Agency.

Police told people to leave their homes in images broadcast by Ant1 TV.

The Fire Brigade told AFP that the wind has dropped a bit so they are hopeful that the fire will slow its pace.

Skai TV showed footage of a burning house with flames licking inside.

Giorgos Papanikolaou, the mayor of Glyfada, where the fire first broke out, said it began at a high voltage electricity power station, according to the agency.



An estimated 20 homes ere reported damaged by the blazes.





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Water-bombing aircraft and helicopters were called in to help control the fires.

Later in the afternoon, a second fire broke out near Athens, in the village of Kouvaras but residential areas were not under threat.

Late in the day, the Fire Brigade told AFP that the [wind](#) has dropped raising hopes the spread of the [fire](#) will slow.

Last summer, Greece's most severe heatwave in decades, which authorities blamed on [climate change](#), saw fires destroy more than 100,000 hectares of forest and farmland, the country's worst wildfire damage since 2007.

More than 200 firefighters and technical equipment provided by European Union countries will be soon deployed to Greece to help boost the battle against large wildfires.

Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Romania and Norway will take part in the deployment, coordinated by the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism.

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