

Spain to declare fire-hit regions disaster zones

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Spain's government said Monday it would classify regions struck by big wildfires this year as disaster zones, a move that will trigger emergency subsidies and other financial support measures.

So far Spain has suffered nearly 400 wildfires, following punishing heatwaves and long dry spells, which have devastated more than 287,000 hectares of land, according to the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS).

That is more than three times the total area destroyed in 2021, according to the EFFIS database.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said his cabinet would on Tuesday approve classifying as a disaster zone "all territories that have been devastated by the great fires that we have endured throughout this year".

He was speaking during a visit to Bejis in the eastern Valencia region, where a wind-fanned blaze ravaged vast swathes of land over the past week, with around 2,200 people evacuated.

Firefighters managed to stabilize the blaze on Sunday, allowing local officials to lift all remaining evacuation orders.

Standing in front of charred trees, Sanchez said he regretted the "psychological blow" suffered by those who had lost their belongings to the flames, as well as the environmental damage.

"Unfortunately, science tells us that the coming summers are going to be even hotter. We are facing a [climate emergency](#)," he added.

Parts of Spain are the driest they have been in a thousand years due to an atmospheric [high-pressure system](#) driven by [climate change](#), according to a study published last month in the journal, *Nature Geoscience*.

Experts say climate change driven by [human activity](#) is boosting the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, droughts and wildfires.

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