

# Spain wildfire resumes, threatening natural park

August 19 2022

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So far this year, Spain has been hit by 391 wildfires, including in the northwestern town of Verin.

A major wildfire in eastern Spain that has destroyed vast swathes of land flared up again Friday despite heavy rainfall, threatening to spread to a nearby natural park, officials said.

So far this year, Spain has suffered nearly 400 wildfires following punishing heatwaves and long dry spells that have devastated more than 283,000 hectares of land, more than three times the total area destroyed in 2021.

Over the past week, hundreds of firefighters have been battling two major wildfires raging out of control in the Valencia region, with a bout of [heavy rainfall](#) offered some respite, almost totally extinguishing the flames.

Although it put an end to the Vall d'Ebo [fire](#) near Benidorm, the Bejis blaze some 70 kilometres (45 miles) northwest of Valencia city flared up again and burning its way towards the Sierra Calderona natural park.

It has already destroyed 19,000 hectares (50,000 acres) of land.

"The fire advanced slowly during the night except in... areas to the southeast where it has raged more aggressively," the emergency services tweeted.

Fire officials said 40 aerial firefighting teams were trying to contain the blaze after what the UME military firefighters said had been an "intense night".

"It's a very big fire with a perimeter stretching more than 120 kilometres," Mariano Hernandez, one of the provincial fire chiefs, told public television.

Early on Friday, a lightning bolt set off another blaze near Olocau inside the Sierra Calderona park, with residents confined to their homes as a preventative measure, the emergency services said.


By midday, the flames appeared to have been quenched but firefighters

had yet to declare it stabilised for fear it would flare up again, public television said.

The [emergency services](#) confirmed all aerial fire teams had left the area.

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## Fires in eastern Spain

 Burnt areas since August 10



Fires in eastern Spain.

## **Train investigation**

Firefighters on Friday morning finally declared the Vall d'Ebo fire stabilised although they said aerial teams were still working there.

It has burnt its way through more than 13,000 hectares of land, figures from the EU's Copernicus satellite show.

Over the past week, the Vall d'Ebo and Bejis wildfires have forced the evacuation of 3,000 people.

Meanwhile, questions multiplied over how a train carrying some 50 passengers managed to run into the Bejis fire zone on Tuesday evening in incident that left around a dozen people injured, several seriously.

The train left Valencia heading for the northern city of Zaragoza and the driver, who had not been alerted to the danger, was ultimately forced to turn the train around.

But before setting off back up the track, passengers panicked on seeing the proximity of the flames, with footage showing people screaming in terror and calling for help as some broke the emergency windows to escape on foot.

An investigation has been opened by the police as well as by train operator RENFE and state track operator Adif, with the opposition Popular Party also demanding answers from the government.

"We will provide all the information necessary to clarify this incident it never happens again," Science Minister Diana Morant told public television, saying "the decisions taken by the train driver were the right ones".

So far this year, Spain has been hit by nearly 400 wildfires, the latest figures from the European Forest Fire Information System show.

Together they have destroyed 284,000 hectares of land—more than three times the area consumed by wildfires in the whole of 2021, which totalled over 84,000 hectares, the figures show.

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