

Wildfires in Portugal, Spain contained

August 18 2022



Over 1,000 firefighters were still mobilised around the Serra da Estrela blaze.

Massive wildfires in Portugal and Spain were largely under control Thursday after forcing thousands from their homes and destroying large swathes of land.

The fires in both countries followed punishing heatwaves and long dry

spells, leaving forests parched and primed to burn.

In Portugal, over 1,000 firefighters were still deployed in the Serra da Estrela [national park](#), but the blaze was mostly contained after days of burning out of control.

With more hot weather forecast, however, there were fears it could flare up again.

"The fire is under control, but it is not extinguished. Consolidation work will continue in the coming days," civil protection commander Miguel Oliveira told TSF radio.

"It is always possible, and very likely, that there will be new reactivations, but we hope that they do not take on worrying proportions," he said.

The huge fire in central Portugal was brought under control last week, only to restart again Monday.

More than 25,000 hectares (nearly 61,800 acres) of land is estimated to have been scorched by the fire in the UNESCO-listed park, home to diverse wildlife species including wildcats and lizards.

Forecasts are predicting a fresh heatwave on Saturday, the latest in a string of hot spells in Portugal this year. July was the hottest on record in nearly a century.

Interior Minister Jose Luis Carneiro said Wednesday "we will experience increased risks" of fires in the coming days due to hot and dry conditions.



More than 25,000 hectares (nearly 61,800 acres) of land is estimated to have been scorched by the fire in Portugal.

'Some good news'

In neighbouring Spain, rain and [lower temperatures](#) eased pressure on firefighters who for days have been battling two major fires in the eastern Valencia region, officials said Thursday.

"Finally, some good news: the rain and the drop in temperatures have helped to contain the fire in Vall d'Ebo," regional leader Ximo Puig tweeted late Wednesday.

He hoped the conditions would also "help stabilise the fire in Bejis"

further north.

By Thursday morning, there were "few visible flames left", Puig told Cadena Ser radio, as the [emergency services](#) said the rain had almost completely put out the fires.

The two wildfires had forced the evacuation of 3,000 people and burnt their way through some 25,000 hectares.

So far this year, Spain has been hit by 391 wildfires, which have destroyed over 283,000 hectares of land in total, the latest figures from the European Forest Fire Information System show.

Portugal: fire in natural park

● Burnt zones since August 6



Portugal: fire in natural park.

This year's fires in Spain have been particularly devastating, destroying

more than three times the area consumed by wildfires in the whole of 2021, which totalled over 84,000 hectares, the figures show.

In Portugal, some 92,000 hectares have burned this year, according to the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests, in the worst fires since 2017 when around 100 people were killed.

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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