

Hawaii wildfires force evacuations, water rescues

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Flames from a Hawaii wildfire stoked by hurricane winds threatened parts of Lahaina, on the island of Maui, and forced evacuations.

Wildfires whipped by hurricane winds triggered evacuations in parts of Hawaii early Wednesday with some residents forced into the ocean to escape the smoke and flames, officials said.

Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke told CNN that evacuations from the island of Maui are "ongoing," but she did not yet have a firm number of

the people forced to flee their homes.

The worst damage appeared to be in the town of Lahaina on the northwestern tip of Maui, one of a number of islands which make up the US state in the Pacific.

"People are jumping into the water to avoid the fire," US Army Major General Kenneth Hara told Hawaii News Now. "The Coast Guard is providing support as we speak."

The Coast Guard said it had "successfully rescued 12 individuals from the waters off Lahaina" and it was sending other vessels to Maui.

Luke, the lieutenant governor, said the fires were caused by dry conditions and the [high winds](#) from Hurricane Dora, which is south of the islands but is not expected to make landfall.

She said the fires were being fanned by winds up to 80 miles (130 kilometers) per hour.

Hundreds of acres have burned, Luke said, but fires "haven't reached too many homes" so far.

Luke activated the National Guard to help respond to the fires.

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