

# Portugal, Spain battle wildfires amid heat wave alerts

August 8 2023

---



Firefighters are using water bombers to battle fierce blazes in Portugal.

Hundreds of firefighters were on Tuesday battling a wildfire that has burned for four days in Portugal, which, like neighboring Spain, is sweltering in a heat wave that has triggered widespread weather alerts.

The Iberian Peninsula is bearing the brunt of climate change in Europe, witnessing increasingly intense heat waves, droughts and wildfires.

The temperature rose to 46.4 degrees Celsius (115.5 degrees Fahrenheit) in Santarem, central Portugal, on Monday—a record for 2023—according to provisional data from the meteorological office.

Some areas of Portugal were forecasts to hit 40C on Tuesday.

The [met office](#) in Spain said the heat there was expected to top 44C on Tuesday and Wednesday, which is predicted to be the fiercest day of this [heat wave](#), the third this year.

On Tuesday, around 900 firefighters backed by 10 water-bomber planes were battling a blaze that has already burned thousands of hectares in Odemira, southwestern Portugal, near the southern tourist mecca of the Algarve.

Portugal's civil protection authority said the perimeter of the [wildfire](#) had been "stabilized" overnight on Monday but there were still "two critical points" that required "a lot of effort".

Some 20 inland villages and a number of rural tourist sites were evacuated on Monday, bringing the number displaced since Saturday to 1,500.

Around 40 people, including 28 fire officers, have been given emergency medical treatment.

## Heat wave alerts

A separate wildfire that has already destroyed around 7,000 hectares (17,300 acres) in Leiria, central Portugal, calmed somewhat overnight on

Monday.

Across the country, nearly 2,800 firefighters and 16 water-bombers were in action on Tuesday.

Weather warnings remained in place in both Portugal and Spain.

Much of the southern half of Spain was on orange alert on Tuesday.

The Spanish met office (AEMET) issued maximum red alerts for parts of Andalusia in the south, the Madrid region in the center and the Basque Country in the far north.

More than 1,000 hectares of land were destroyed by flames in Spain over the weekend.

A fourth large wildfire broke out on Monday in Extremadura, central Spain, near the border with Portugal. Firefighters were unable to contain it overnight.

In total, wildfires have destroyed 100,000 hectares of land across the Iberian Peninsula this year, according to preliminary estimates. This is on top of the record 400,000 hectares destroyed last year.

© 2023 AFP

Citation: Portugal, Spain battle wildfires amid heat wave alerts (2023, August 8) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-08-portugal-spain-wildfires.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.