

# Spain, Portugal battle wildfires as temperatures soar

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Over 1,000 firefighters battled a fire in central Portugal as officials warned thousands of hectares were at risk.

Firefighters in Spain and Portugal were battling to keep wildfires spanning thousands of hectares contained Monday as a scorching heat

wave hit the Iberian peninsula, worsening conditions.

A thousand firefighters were deployed in central and southern Portugal, supported by 12 water-bombing planes, to battle blazes, according to the national civil protection authority.

At least nine crew have been injured in the southern fire near the town of Odemira, which is being fanned by winds, an official told local media.

Another fire near the central city of Castelo Branco has destroyed some 7,000 hectares (17,300 acres).

Meanwhile, three wildfires that scorched more than 1,000 hectares in Spain over the weekend were under control Monday, but the country remained on high hot weather alert as it faced its third heat wave of the summer.

The regions of Andalusia in the south, the central Castilla-La Mancha and Extremadura in the west were placed on an orange alert with temperatures expected to reach 43 degrees Celsius (109 Fahrenheit) on Monday, according to Spain's weather agency Aemet.

Central and southern Portugal similarly is facing temperatures of over 40C, prompting a "very high or maximum" risk for fires.



More than 70,000 hectares have burned in Spain since the beginning of the year.

It is the third summer heat wave to hit the Iberian peninsula, which is expected to last until Thursday.

A fire that broke around 10 kilometers (six miles) from the Spanish coastal city of Cadiz, a popular destination for tourists on the Atlantic Ocean, on Sunday had "stabilized" by midnight, the firefighting service Infoca said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Another fire, also under control, blackened some 450 hectares (1,100 acres) near the southwestern city of Huelva between Saturday and Sunday.

In Catalonia, on the Mediterranean coast near the French border, firefighters were working since Friday to extinguish a blaze, an effort that was being complicated by wind gusts.

Catalan fire officials said Monday on Twitter, which is being rebranded as X, that the blaze was now under control, though around 30 firefighting units were still on site where nearly 600 hectares burned, forest officials said.

Catalonia and Andalusia are the two regions most frequently hit by drought, creating conditions for fires to spark.

More than 70,000 hectares have burned in Spain since the beginning of the year, after a record in 2022 when more than 300,000 hectares were destroyed, according to the European Forest Fire Information System (Effis).

Experts say the greater frequency of heat waves, which are also increasingly long and intense, is a consequence of climate change.

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