

With fires in east Canada 'under control,' evacuations ending

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A July 12, 2024 aerial view of a wildfire near Canada's northeastern town of Wabush.

A forest fire in northeastern Canada that forced the evacuation of more than 9,000 people a week ago is now under control, allowing those displaced to begin returning home, authorities said Saturday.

The risk to the towns of Labrador City and Wabush is now "very low," Premier Andrew Furey of Newfoundland and Labrador province told reporters.

"We're breathing another sigh of relief here," he said.

"As a result, we're in the good position today to be able to partially lift the evacuation order" for what he called the "largest evacuation in provincial history."

For now, only workers deemed essential—hospital employees, supermarket workers and government staff—will be allowed back as they prepare for the return of the remaining evacuees beginning Monday, he said.

The evacuation had been challenging. Residents from this remote region had to travel 300 miles (500 kilometers) to reach safety on the lone available road.

While the fire situation in eastern Canada is improving, the country's west has seen more and more forest fires erupt in recent days.

More than 320 fires are now burning in British Columbia province on the Pacific coast, including three particularly large blazes. Several thousand people remain on alert, ready to evacuate if necessary.

And in Alberta province, more than 5,000 people from isolated Indigenous communities were under [evacuation](#) orders, with out-of-control blazes threatening the only road providing access to each

community, officials said.

The federal Environment Ministry has issued several smoke-related air pollution advisories in the Rockies and the north, where Edmonton, the province's second-largest city, is impacted by the smoke.

Authorities blame a deadly combination of thunderstorms and [extreme temperatures](#) of 86 to 104 Fahrenheit (30 to 40 Celsius) for the outbreak—conditions they expect to persist for several more days.

Experts say [climate change](#) has resulted in drier and hotter conditions in many regions, sharply raising the risk of major fires.

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