

Sweden's wildfires abating, foreign firefighters leave

31 July 2018



Wildfires in Sweden are finally easing after international efforts to bring them under control

Wildfires that have been raging across Sweden are abating, Swedish authorities said Tuesday, as French, Italian and German firefighters who came to assist gradually leave the country.

Two Canadair firefighting aircraft, dispatched from France to Sweden in mid-July, departed on Tuesday, days after planes from Italy and Portugal returned home.

Swedish emergency services SOS Alarm said meanwhile there were 10 fires all under control on Tuesday, half the number registered last week and far below the 45 to 70 fires reported earlier in July.

There has been practically no rainfall in Sweden since the beginning of May, aside from a few millimetres in mid-June and some brief rainstorms at the weekend that brought some relief.

The [drought](#) and [high temperatures](#)—Sweden registered the hottest month of July in two centuries, with temperatures hovering around 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit)—led to wildfires

across the country from mid-July, from the south up to the Arctic Circle.

No casualties have been reported.

The Nordic country, where summer temperatures are usually closer to 23 Celsius, is under-equipped to deal with this kind of natural catastrophe and asked for help from Italy, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Poland and France.

"The two French aircraft are leaving Sweden today," a spokesman for the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Gunno Ivansson, told AFP.

Some 60 French firefighters concluded their mission on Tuesday, and were to return to France on Thursday.

"The Danish and Polish troops are the last ones and are scheduled to leave Sweden on August 4 and 6, but this might change if the situation changes," another MSB spokesman, Anders Thoren, said.

According to Swedish officials, "approximately 20,000 hectares" of forests have burned up.

Meanwhile, the Swedish government on Monday announced 1.2 billion kronor (117 million euros, \$137 million) in aid to help farmers hit hard by the drought.

The aid is intended to help farmers buy feed for their livestock given a shortage of grass and hay.

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APA citation: Sweden's wildfires abating, foreign firefighters leave (2018, July 31) retrieved 12 April 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-07-sweden-wildfires-abating-foreign-firefighters.html>

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