

Rescuers evacuate **50,000** as Turkey battles wildfires

The worst blaze began Sunday in Seferihisar

● **42,300** were evacuated from Seferihisar

● **20** evacuated homes were gutted by the blaze

● Wildfires have ravaged nearly 19,000 hectares of land across Turkey so far this year

AFP | Ankara, Turkey

Rescuers in Turkey have evacuated more than 50,000 people, mostly from the western province of Izmir, as firefighters battled a string of wildfires, the AFAD disaster agency said Monday.

The worst blaze began Sunday in Seferihisar, a forested area 50 kilometres (30 miles) southwest of the resort city of Izmir, spreading rapidly with winds of up to 120 kilometres (75 miles) per hour, officials said.

"A total of over 50,000 citizens from 41 settlements have been temporarily relocated to safe areas," AFAD wrote on X, saying 79 people had been affected by smoke and other fire-related issues, none seriously.

Of that number, 42,300 were evacuated from Seferihisar, where TV footage showed huge areas of flame raging through



Villagers try to put out the fire after a wildfire broke out in Seferihisar district in Izmir

forested areas, sending vast clouds of black smoke into the sky.

Overnight, around 20 evacuated homes were gutted by the blaze, with only the walls left standing, footage on private TV network NTV showed.

Residents in the seaside village of Urkmez had on Sunday felled trees to create firebreaks and protect their homes as the flames advanced, a witness told

AFP.

"Unfortunately, the wind is continuing to blow very strongly," Agriculture and Forestry Minister Ibrahim Yumakli told reporters on Monday afternoon.

The Turkish State Meteorological Service warned about strong winds over the weekend.

Flights briefly suspended

Yumakli said more than 1,000 people had been drafted in to

tackle the blaze with four planes, 14 helicopters and 106 fire trucks.

AFAD said another 3,000 residents were evacuated from Manisa, 40 kilometres north of Izmir.

Another 1,500 people were

forced out of their homes in the southern Hatay region, where four helicopters, 211 fire engines and 540 firefighters were fighting a blaze some 10 kilometres north of the city of Antakya, the governor said.

Around 850 others were forced to flee from two other wildfires in northwestern Turkey, AFAD said.

Meanwhile, Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said on X that one person had been arrested for allegedly starting one of the wildfires in the Izmir area with a so-called line.



The suspect is alleged to have set fire to their own residence, (which) subsequently caused a forest fire," he wrote, without giving further details.

Since Friday, 263 fires had broken out across Turkey, of which 259 were under control while

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Turkey has recorded over 70 wildfires across 25 provinces in June 2025 alone, with extreme heatwaves and strong winds intensifying the blazes – marking one of the country's worst early summer fire outbreaks in recent years.

efforts were ongoing to fight the remaining four, the agriculture and forestry ministry said.

Izmir airport, which temporarily suspended flights on Sunday, resumed operations, Turkish media reported.

Wildfires have ravaged nearly 19,000 hectares of land across Turkey so far this year, according to website of the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS).

Experts say human-driven climate change is causing more frequent and more intense wildfires and other natural disasters, and have warned Turkey to take measures to tackle the problem.

Southern Europe roasts as **temperatures soar**

Rome, Italy

French authorities put Paris on red alert for extreme heat and Spain and Portugal reported record temperatures as a heatwave gripped southern Europe and Britain Monday, triggering health warnings and fuelling wildfires.

The summer's first major heatwave has scorched countries along the northern coast of the Mediterranean, and the sea itself hit a record temperature for the month of June, meteorologists said.

France's national weather agency placed Paris and 15 other departments on its highest weather alert for Tuesday, with temperatures of up to 41 degrees Celsius (105.8 Fahrenheit) predicted.

Ambulances stood ready near tourist hotspots as experts warned that such heatwaves, intensified by climate change, would become more frequent.

In Turkey, rescuers evacuated more than 50,000 people threatened by a string of wildfires. Most were from the western province of Izmir, where winds of 120 kilometres (75 miles) per hour fanned the blazes.



People refresh themselves under a mist sprayer in Lille, northern France

Firefighters also continued to battle blazes that broke out Sunday in Italy, fed by the heat and whipped up by strong winds.

Cities are offering different ways to stay cool, from free swimming pools in Marseille and parks open until 11:00 pm in Bordeaux, to free guided tours for the elderly in Venice's air-conditioned museums.

Records

Temperatures in southern Spain soared to 46C on Saturday, a new record for June, the national weather agency said.

The Mediterranean Sea itself

was warmer than usual, recording a new June high of 26.01C on Sunday, according to French weather service scientist Thibault Guinaldo, citing data from EU monitor Copernicus.

Agathe Lacombe, a tourist from Strasbourg visiting Madrid with her family, called the heatwave "a bit difficult".

Portugal's national meteorological agency said Monday the temperature had reached 46.6C in Mora on Sunday, which experts cited by local media said was a new June record.

Seven regions in central and southern Portugal, including the



Pedestrians cool off with a public water jet in a street during a heatwave in Paris

capital Lisbon, were placed on red alert for the second day running Monday, with fire warnings in many forested areas.

In Italy, images posted by local media showed people running into the sea at a beach resort in Baia Domizia near Naples as flames tore through pinewoods behind them.

Peak

In France, the heatwave is due to peak on Tuesday and Wednesday, when about 200 public schools plan to close, partially or completely.

No such luck for Italy, where

the sizzling temperatures will continue to the end of the week and beyond, according to Antonio Spano, founder of the il-meteo.it meteorological website.

Authorities have issued red alerts for 18 cities across the country over the next few days, including Rome, Milan, Verona, Perugia and Palermo.

Italy's opposition parties urged the government Monday to improve conditions in the country's stifling prisons, which are notoriously overcrowded.

'Not normal'

In Croatia, the vast majority

of the coastline was on red alert, while an extreme temperature alert was issued for Montenegro.

And with little relief in sight, the meteorological service in Serbia warned that "severe and extreme drought conditions prevail" in much of the country.

In Madrid, where temperatures approached 40C, 32-year-old photographer Diego Radames told AFP he found the June heat "not normal".

With temperatures set to rise as high as 34 degrees in London and elsewhere in southwest England, Britain's Met Office weather service upped the number of amber heat alerts Monday to seven regions, as the Wimbledon tennis tournament was getting underway.

It is provisionally the hottest start to Wimbledon on record.

The BBC said temperatures at the All England Club had reached 31.4C by 1500 GMT, surpassing the previous record for the start of the tournament of 29.3C, set in 2001.

"Wimbledon when it's really hot is quite sweaty. Last time we were very hot so this time we've got rose (wine) in a cooler so we can do a better job," Londoner Sean Tipper, 31, told AFP.