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# Information bulletin

## Greece: Wildfires

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>Date of issue: 24 July 2018</b>	
<b>Date of disaster:</b> 23 July 2018 (ongoing)	<b>Point of contact:</b> <b>Marco Vargas, Disaster Management Delegate</b> <b>IFRC Country Office Greece</b> <b>Phone: +30 698 462 8190; email: marco.vargas@ifrc.org</b>
<b>Host National Society: Hellenic Red Cross (HRC)</b>	

*This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time.*

## The situation

Since Monday, 23 July 2018, Greece has been experiencing a number of wildfires in forests and villages across the country, with 14 fire outbreaks on three fronts as of Tuesday noon.<sup>1</sup> According to the General Secretary of Civil Protection, the fires constituted a worst-case scenario due to (1) the high-density forest in the affected areas, (2) strong winds, and (3) high temperatures. On Monday evening, a state of emergency was declared, and assistance from the EU was requested.<sup>2</sup>

The two major outbreaks happened in the wider region of Attica. The first fire started on Monday in the Gerania mountains in the west of Attica, in the settlement of Kineta. Dense pine forest has been burnt and flames have also reached house yards in several other nearby settlements. A few hours afterwards, fires started to break out in the region of Rafina. The village of Mati has been the most affected, and has burnt down almost completely. Fires also broke out in several areas of northern Greece, and on some islands including Crete, however further away from residential areas with no casualties reported. As of Tuesday morning, fires continue around Attica and on Crete. Extinguishing the fire is very difficult due to the strong winds, and the extreme difficulty of access to the areas.

As of 24 June, the death toll has reached approximately 49 people, after 26 persons were found dead close to the seaside by Red Cross Samaritans, as communicated by the president of the Hellenic Red Cross. This number has been confirmed by the fire brigades. More than 150 have been reported to be injured; and many remain in critical condition. 700 people have been rescued through the sea by the coast guard and the navy, after being forced to flee to beaches to escape the flames.<sup>34</sup> Residents in the coastal region west of Attica were requested to abandon their homes, and hundreds of people have been evacuated. Temporary shelter is provided by the municipality.



*Red Cross setting up first aid stations. Photo Credit: HRC*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.efsyn.gr/live/mahi-me-tis-floges-stin-kineta>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.efsyn.gr/live/mahi-me-tis-floges-stin-kineta>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.efsyn.gr/live/mahi-me-tis-floges-stin-kineta>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/23/greeks-urged-to-leave-homes-as-wildfires-spread-near-athens>

The government has mobilised all emergency resources, including fire service vehicles and firefighters, with aircraft and helicopters contributing to the firefighting efforts.<sup>5</sup> Spain and Cyprus have offered assistance.

Based on the initial assessment of the HRC, many people are in need of first aid, psychological support and primary health care. Chronic patients need medical attention. There is also need for a doctor to do medical triage and referral of patients who arrive at the first aid station. According to doctors providing volunteer service in the field, some people, especially elderly require primary health care services. Until the fire is put out, first aid will be needed on all fronts – including for the firefighters and volunteers operating in the field and for the people affected by the fire.

People affected by the fires, especially those who have lost relatives or property are in great need of support. Red Cross volunteers who found the dead bodies will require psychosocial support (PSS) as well. A few missing people have been reported, and there is a need for restoring family links (RFL) services. People who have suffered damage to their property or have lost their homes need cash assistance to meet basic needs in the next few days. Cash assistance is also being considered to meet longer-term recovery needs, including those of people who have lost their primary accommodation.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

So far, Hellenic Red Cross has supported with first aid and relief item distribution. In the Gerania Mountains, in the municipality of Megara, the HRC has responded by mobilizing a force of five Samaritan rescuers to set up a first aid (FA) station and provide FA services. The HRC Disaster Management unit has been monitoring the situation and has been in coordination with the municipal, state and other civil protection actors. In Rafina, the HRC has mobilised 18 Samaritan rescuers, who have set up three FA stations. One station is located at the sports hall of the Municipality of Nea Makri, one outside the town hall of Rafina and one at the port of Rafina. The Samaritans, following a request by the Mayor of Rafina, have given 40 blankets and sleeping bags in case there is a need for distribution at the sports hall of Rafina where people are directed for shelter. HRC is currently coordinating with the municipality regarding another 80 foldable beds that have been requested – 20 have been given to the sports hall as well while the other 60 remain available within close reach ready to be distributed. RFL is in the field as well to support with missing persons.

The National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) of HRC has deployed one team member to assess the situation, and the NDRT team leader has been deployed to coordinate in the field. Four members of the Emergency Health Unit (EHU) have been deployed to assess the emergency health needs in Rafina. The EHU is coordinating with the Spanish Red Cross for mobilising the Mobile Unit. The Social Welfare Division of HRC has deployed members from the Emergency Psycho-Social Support Unit (EPSSU) to support people affected as well as the responders. Furthermore, the HRC Cash Transfer team is doing an assessment.

### Contact information

**For further information, specifically related to this emergency, please contact:**

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/greece-major-forest-fires-rage-athens-homeowners-flee-180723181521809.html>



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## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



**Save lives,**  
protect livelihoods,  
and strengthen recovery  
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**  
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**  
and a culture of  
**non-violence** and **peace**.