Date of Disaster: Fires in multiple locations, since late July

N° of National Societies engaged in response operations (as of 5 August, based information available at the time): Bulgarian Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Red Cross of North Macedonia, Russian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Turkish Red Crescent

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is processing a DREF request from the Italian Red Cross, but at this point is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. National Societies might, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population. In case you wish to offer any kind of support, please consult IFRC Regional Office for Europe Partnerships and Resource Development Team.

1The list of countries and National Societies mentioned in this report is not exhaustive, there may be other National Societies responding, this report is based on the information available as of 5 August 2021. Future updates may include information on additional National Societies responding to the fires in their respective countries.
The situation – overview

High temperatures, longer period of droughts, lower precipitation and strong wind bursts lead to the onset of fires across many parts of Europe in the months of July and August. Over the last few days, the fires continued to spread in several countries, amongst which the worst affected are Turkey, Italy and Greece.

The fires in Turkey and Greece are the worst in decades, meanwhile the temperature is breaking records in Greece. Italy (region of Sardinia) has also been suffering from multiple fires of various sizes. Several residential areas and tourist destinations have been evacuated in Turkey, Italy and Greece. Tens of thousands of hectares of forests, pastures, and farms have turned into ashes, the largest area being in Turkey with close to 95,000 hectares burnt. There have been human casualties, and injuries include respiratory difficulties, small wounds and burns. Countless number of animals died, adding to major agricultural damages. The significant loss of livestock will likely have a negative impact on agricultural activities and thus citizens’ income in the long term. Evacuation and response operations have disrupted land transportation along highways and side roads. There are power outages and disruption to electricity as well as water supplies in affected areas.
According to the European Forest Fire Information System, the number of fires in 2021 exceeded previous year averages.

![Figure 2 - Comparison of the number of fires (2008-2021, EFFIS)](image)

An intense heatwave is also currently affecting the Southern Region of Europe and the Russian Federation. As forecasted, a significantly warmer than usual air mass is moving from the Mediterranean into the Balkan peninsula, with nearly 10°C above average temperatures. Italy, Serbia, North Macedonia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece are the worst affected by the extreme and dry heatwave².

² [https://www.severe-weather.eu/europe-weather/most-intense-heatwave-summer-2021-forecast-mk](https://www.severe-weather.eu/europe-weather/most-intense-heatwave-summer-2021-forecast-mk)
Heatwaves and Climate change

An increase in the frequency and intensity of heatwaves is one of the clearest and most certain signs of climate change. In 2017, an attribution study looking at a heatwave in the Euro-Mediterranean region found that climate change increases the chances of seeing a summer as hot as 2017 by at least a factor of 10.

There is also high confidence that heatwaves will continue to increase in frequency and intensity in the future (IPCC AR5). Year after year, Europe is facing hotter and more severe heatwaves that can fuel other types of extreme weather conditions, like wildfires. Recent heatwaves that have had a large impact in Europe include in 2003 where an estimated 70,000 people died of heat-related causes, as well as 2010, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Heatwaves are deadly hazards that disproportionately affect populations, such as the elderly, infants, those with pre-existing medical conditions (cardiovascular and pulmonary conditions), pregnant women, those living in informal settlements and other vulnerable groups. However, impacts are preventable and the Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies in Europe are already working to reduce them, as outlined in the Heatwave Guide for National Societies.

Heatwaves sometimes co-occur with wildfires, as was the case in 2010 in Russia where extreme heat and wildfires resulted in at least 10,000 casualties.

Climate change is likely playing a role in the southern European fires by making the conditions ripe for fires to occur. Higher temperatures and lower summer rainfall dry out the landscape, making it easier for fires to spread quicker and burn longer. Climate change is not the only cause of the fires, but it is a significant one. Climate projections also show that wildfire risk in the Mediterranean region is expected to increase with climate change, with an increase in high fire danger days and fire season length (IPCC AR5).

As of 1st of August 2021 (Figure 4), most of the southern Europe (particularly Portugal, Spain, Greece, Balkan region, Turkey, Russian Federation) were characterised as in "very high" (dark red) or "extreme" (purple) fire danger based on the Fire Weather Index (FWI).³

Forecast developed for 12th August 2021 (Figure 5) shows that this situation may possibly deteriorate with more European countries and regions being categorised as in "low/moderate" (yellow/orange) to "extreme" (purple) fire danger.

³ The Fire Weather Index (FWI) is a meteorologically based index used worldwide to estimate fire danger. It consists of different components that account for the effects of fuel moisture and wind on fire behaviour and spread. The higher the FWI is, the more favourable the meteorological conditions to trigger a wildfire are. For more information [https://climate.copernicus.eu/fire-weather-index](https://climate.copernicus.eu/fire-weather-index)
The Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies have been providing their support since the onset of the wildfires. Their main activities consist of first aid, the distribution of food, water, hygiene kits, clothing, vehicles and psychosocial assistance. Other international actors have also mobilized their resources (firefighting planes and other vehicles, financial support) in an effort to extinguish the fires and ease the effects on affected population.

**Situation Update per Country**

**Bulgaria**

**Number of People Affected: N/A**

As of 4 August, 2021, due to the severe meteorological situation on the territory of the country caused by the high temperatures and very hot weather, many forest and field fires have occurred. The worst situation was in the districts of Pernik, Plovdiv and Kyustendil, where the extinguishing of some of the forest fires that occurred on 2-3 August 2021 continues. More than 150 employees of Fire Safety and Protection of Population General Directorate are involved in the operations (firefighting), with more than 40 piece of specialized equipment.

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4 The list of countries and National Societies mentioned in this report is not exhaustive, there may be other National Societies responding, this report is based on the information available as of 5 August 2021. Future updates may include information on additional National Societies responding to the fires in their respective countries.
equipment, as well as over 120 forest employees, 60 employees and a helicopter of the Ministry of Defense, and over 20 volunteers.

**Greece**

**Number of People Affected: 7,000**

Greece is experiencing its worst heatwave in decades, with the temperature reaching a record heat of 45 degrees in some cities. On 27 July 2021, a wildfire broke out in the forest area of Stamata in the Attica Region of Greece. Due to strong winds, the fire spread quickly towards the wider area, reaching residential communities and properties. Approximately more than 2,500 residencies have been evacuated, more than 25 houses were burned, and 15 cars destroyed. 310 firefighters, 110 fire trucks, 12 helicopters and 9 aircrafts were mobilized in the area. On 28 July 2021, another fire broke out in the forest area at the villages Elekistra, Karya and Neo Souli located in the northwest Peloponese Region of Greece. More than 15 houses and 3,000 acres of forest area have been burned. In the area, 294 firefighters, 77 fire trucks, 12 helicopters, and 9 aircrafts were mobilized. Another fire broke out on 31 July, in the areas of Psathopyrgos Lampiri, Kamares and Ziria in the Rodhes Island. The response of the fire department was extensive to the fires in the area. It is worth mentioning that in the first semester of 2021 the total number of agroforestry fires increased 20.1% compared to 2020. In the first seven months of 2021, a total of 162,132 acres of agroforestry were burned, a percentage of 49.3% increase compared to 2020.

**Italy**

**Number of People Affected: 11,600 (based on Government figures)**

On 24 July, wildfires broke out in the Montiferru area, in Oristano Provence in the centre-west part of the independent region of the island of Sardinia. Inhabitants flee for safety from the towns of Cuglieri, Scano di Montiferro and Sennariolo. At least 1, 500 people have been evacuated from their homes. According to a Tuesday report, 20, 000 hectares (50, 000 acres) of forests, pastures and villages have been destroyed and a significant loss of livestock have been reported. The National Civil Protection Department opened a crisis unit and requested international assistance to increase the number of Canadair (aerial firefighting assets) available. The UCPM responded by sending planes from Greece and France. The National Fire and Rescue Corps as well as the Regional Authorities and the Civil Protection Volunteers are operating for wildfire fighting, interface urban-wildfire firefighting, supporting evacuation, livelihoods support, damage assessment and coordination. The forecast for the next few days is not reassuring; a sack of hot air from Africa will cause high temperatures and sustained ventilation from the southern quadrant of the island. Other Regions in Italy are also suffering forest fires (e.g., Sicily and Abruzzo).

**North Macedonia**

**Number of People Affected: N/A**

Starting from 30 July 2021, Republic of North Macedonia was hit by tremendous heat wave that resulted with severe fires in several regions in the country that are raging for 6 days and they are still not under control despite the enormous efforts of the state institutions responsible for crisis management as well as the local population. The most affected are Strumica, Kochani, Kumanovo, Gevgelija, Valandovo, Bitola and Prilep, Shtip, Skopje, Tetovo, Radovish, Ohrid and Kriva Palanka regions (see map). The severe fires in numerous regions in the country resulted with devastation of many forests, fertile land and property of the population. Unfortunately, one casualty is reported in the fires and several injured persons (inhaling smoke) due to the fires. Numerous houses have been burnt and damaged in several
villages, as well as one church and one school. A lot of forests, fertile land and crops have been destroyed by the fires.

The weather forecast for the forthcoming days is extreme high temperatures with +40°C, which unfortunately means that the situation with the raging fires would continue in the next 10 days. The overall coordination of the emergency situation due to the heat wave and fires in the country is coordinated by the Crisis Management Centre. The response operation is supported by the national and local teams of the Fire Brigade, Crisis Management Center, Directorate for Protection and Rescue, the Army, and the Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Health and other responsible institutions and the local population.

The response firefighting teams and the local population are fighting the fires in different regions in the country around the clock. The State Assessment on 4 August proposed the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia to declare state of crisis on the whole territory of the country for a period of 30 days.

**Russian Federation**

**Number of People Affected: N/A**

Large forest fires broke out in several regions of Russia. State of emergency was announced in Yakutia and Karelia. The direst situation was in Yakutia, where over 1.5 million hectares of forest burned down in a month, and 107 settlements remain in the zone covered by smoke. As of 21 July, 33 forest fires were active in Karelia on an area of almost 7.3 thousand hectares. Because of the smoke and rapidly spreading fire, traffic on the federal highway was restricted, and residents of the village of Naistenjärvi evacuated. Since the beginning of the fire season, 250 forest fires have broken out on the territory of Karelia on an area of almost 9 thousand hectares.

**Turkey**

**Number of People Affected: N/A**

Fire broke out in Turkey’s Aegean and Mediterranean provinces on 28 July as a result of record-breaking high temperature. Since 28 July, 132 wildfires have been reported so far, blazing through and causing significant destructions in 36 different provinces. Antalya and Bodrum are the worst affected areas. This year’s wildfires are devastating for Turkey as almost 95,000 hectares (235,000 acres) have been burnt so far; higher than an average area burnt between 2008 and 2020. Coastal areas including tourist destinations were evacuated. A significant loss of livestock and forest territories was reported. Eight people have died, and many have been injured.
Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Bulgaria
Number of People Assisted as of 4 August: 300

The Bulgarian Red Cross is part of the National Program and the National Disaster Protection Plan, and the NS is a member of the National Advisory Council for Disaster Risk Reduction and is part of the Working Group for the National Climate Adaptation Strategy and Plan. The NS maintains constant contact with the responsible authorities (at national and local level) regarding the needs and necessities linked to population affected by the fires in Bulgaria. So far, there were no substantial requests for assistance since fires are localized and limited. There were 6 depopulated houses which burnt down, and a fire close to railroad. The Bulgarian Red Cross branches in the affected regions are distributing potable water and following closely the situation. Additionally, the NS has set up water distribution points within the country in an effort to mitigate the impact of the heat on health and well-being of the population. There have been ongoing publications regarding safety tips in hot weather and prevention in order to raise awareness about risks.

Greece
Number of People Assisted as of 4 August: N/A

The Hellenic Red Cross is on the ground with 12 staff and 120 volunteers. The National Society is always ready to offer valuable services in any emergency that may arise, such as the fires that broke out in Attica, Achaia and Rhodes.

On Tuesday, 27 July, volunteers of the Hellenic Red Cross, from the first moments of the spread of the fire in Stamata, Attica, went to the area and organized a First Aid Station, offering their valuable services all night. After communicating with the Fire Department and the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, the Hellenic Red Cross installed a First Aid station inside the building of the Town Hall in Dionysos providing first aids to everyone in need.

On July 28, 2021, a wildfire broke out in villages Elekistra, Karya and Neo Souli in northwest Peloponese Region of Greece. Due to strong winds blowing that day, the fire spread quickly towards the wider area, reaching residential communities and threatening properties. Immediately HRC volunteers-rescuers arrived with three vehicles to the affected area, assisting the firefighting efforts. In addition, the HRC volunteers provided first aid to residents who had suffered burns and to firefighters who were experiencing respiratory implications. In the fire on July 31 that broke out in the areas of Psathopyrgos Lampiri, Kamares, Ziria, HRC lifeguards patrolled by boat the coastal zone and evacuated people trapped from the fire. On the same day, a group of HRC volunteers with two vehicles operated in Lampiri, Kamares and in Ziria, offering first aid services.

Italy
Number of People Assisted as of 4 August: 1,500

The Italian Red Cross is responding to the wildfires in Sardinia from the beginning of the emergency, mobilising their local, regional and national resources, and providing the following services:

- support to the evacuees (evacuating people – particularly older people, dependents, using vehicles and teams -, distributing relief aids, establishing and managing staging areas),
- establishing emergency warehouses,
- providing support to the fire brigades (through emergency medical services and logistics support, and water-tank truck),
- transferring and distributing fodder for the cattle (the National response capacity is active, logistically supporting delivery from mainland to Sardinia, through its Emergency Response Centre network)
The Italian Red Cross has requested support from the IFRC DREF (Disaster Relief Emergency Fund). As of 5 August, the request and plan of action is being finalized.

**North Macedonia**

**Number of People Assisted** as of 5 August: **over 5,000**

Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia is in process of providing immediate support to the state emergency response teams in putting down the fires and the national society is conducting a field assessment and collecting and processing information obtained from the Red Cross branches and the state institutions and will subsequently develop a plan of action to assist the affected population.

In the disaster-affected regions, the branches of the National Society mobilized the emergency response teams and they are on the field with the representatives of the state institutions providing logistics support and distributing water, food and hygiene items, blankets and mattresses. The Red Cross is supporting the response teams of the state institutions and making assessment in the field to appraise the immediate needs of the local population affected by the fires.

As of 5 August, the following activities have been conducted:

- 35 Red Cross volunteers (the emergency response team) of the RC Branches Kochani, Kumanovo, Kriva Palanka, Delchevo supported the efforts of the firefighters.
- The Red Cross of RNM opened SOS telephone lines for psychological first aid for the affected population from the fires. PFA is provided by the RC trained volunteers. Any interested person affected by the fires can ask questions and receive answers and tips for coping with the situation that threatens the well-being of the citizens. The open telephone lines are divided into regions and municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Food parcels</th>
<th>Hygiene parcels</th>
<th>Water bottles</th>
<th>Blankets</th>
<th>Mattresses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berovo/Pehchevo</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3,992</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumanovo</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,592</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delchevo</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>960 + 2,592</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kochani</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,592</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Russian Federation / Republic of Karelia**

**Number of People Assisted** as of 4 August: **at least 120**

In the Russian Federation, firefighting is handled by the Ministry of Emergency Situations. The Russian Red Cross is not involved in fighting fires. Russian Red Cross takes care of people affected by fires and is providing people with humanitarian aid. In Karelia Republic Suoyarvsky, Olonetsky, Prionezhsky, Muezersky, Pudozhsky, Belomorsky, Kalevalsky, Kondopozhsky, Pryazhinsky, Segezhsky districts were affected by fire. 11 houses were damaged, 120 people were evacuated to a temporary residence. The affected branch is on the ground with 3 local staff and 25 volunteers, distributing hygiene kits, food aid, providing first aid and psychosocial support services. The Karelian regional branch Russian Red Cross provided people with: 30 sets of bedding, 30 sets of bed linen, 30 hygiene kits, 4,800 masks and 50-liter bottles of antiseptic.
In addition, the headquarters transferred 200,000 rubles to the Karelian branch for the purchase of humanitarian aid for the affected people. Procurement is in progress for the necessary items.

**Turkey**

**Number of People Assisted** as of 4 August: **302,636**

The Turkish Red Crescent set up crisis desks in the affected regions through its Deputy Directorate General of Disaster Management and mobilized 1,059 staff members (including disaster response specialists) as well as 3,300 volunteers since the beginning of the disaster response. The field teams have been on active field duty since 28.07.2021. Turkish Red Crescent response has been focusing on wildfires raging in 15 different provinces; the Aladağ district of Adana, Manavgat district of Antalya, Sütçüler district of Isparta, Silifke district of Mersin, Marmaris district of Muğla, Seydikemer district of Muğla, Koza district of Adana, Buldan district of Denizli, Bozuyaz and Aydıncık districts of Mersin, Bodrum district of Muğla, Milas district of Muğla, Köyceğiz district of Muğla, Kadirli district of Osmaniye, Karacasu district of Aydın and the Sorgun district of Uşak. As of 04.08.2021, Aladağ / Adana, Silifke / Mersin, Kadirli and Karacadağ / Osmaniye as well as Sorgun / Uşak relief efforts have been successfully completed.

The activities undertaken by the Turkish Red Crescent disaster response teams include:
- distribution of hot meals through mobile kitchen units, distribution of food baskets, ready to eat meals, drinking water and beverages
- distribution of clothing items and hygiene sets
- provision of psychosocial support and assistance.
- first aid assistance has been provided by Turkish Red Crescent staff to residents suffering from minor wounds and the effects of the wildfires.

31 different Turkish Red Crescent branches located throughout the affected provinces have also been actively involved in the provision and delivery of the below stated relief materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assistance</th>
<th>Number of services provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food assistance: 302,636 people supported as of 4 August</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot meal distribution</td>
<td>101,636 hot meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to eat rations</td>
<td>190,725 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>156,167 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food basket</td>
<td>100 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>351,892 litres (624,822 units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td>193,630 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing distributed</td>
<td>660 sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene sets distributed</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles deployed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger vehicles</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire monitoring vehicles</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minivans</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucks</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication vehicles</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field coordination vehicle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile kitchens</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IFRC Country Delegations and Regional Office**

- A DREF request to support the Italian RC response in Sardinia is being processed
- IFRC Country Delegations in Turkey and Greece are in close communication and coordination with the Turkish Red Crescent Society and Hellenic Red Cross respectively and are ready to support if required.
- IFRC Country Cluster Delegation in Moscow is in close communication and coordination with the Russian RC and is ready to support if required.
- Wildfires have been leading news bulletins across Europe. On 2 August the IFRC Regional Office has published a [press release](#), and the Regional Director has given an [interview](#) to Thomson Reuters. Key messages, photos and videos have also been shared via the IFRC Newswire and regular [updates](#) have been posted on social media platforms.
Contact information – IFRC Regional Office for Europe

For further information specifically related to these operations please contact:

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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 (NGOs) 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.