

Massive Fires Erupt Near Jerusalem in 'National Emergency'

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are assisting in efforts to combat fires erupting near Jerusalem. Ten communities have evacuated, according to reports.

According to the Fire and Rescue Service's Jerusalem District commander, the fires may be the largest in Israel's history, The Times of Israel reported. "We are amidst a very large wildfire, maybe the largest there has ever been in this country," Shmulik Friedman told reporters. "Regarding our activity, it will continue for a very long time. We are far from having control [over the fires]."

On Israel's Memorial Day, as we mourn our fallen, @israelpolice and @IDF forces are operating on the ground and in the air due to widespread fires in the Jerusalem Hills.

These fires are not random. They are being encouraged and celebrated by terrorist-supporting accounts...

– Embassy of Israel to the USA (@IsraelinUSA) April 30, 2025

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When asked what caused the fires, Friedman said, "We do not currently know what caused the fire, we have absolutely no clue, and we are not yet dealing with this."

Defense Minister Israel Katz called the flames a "national emergency."

"We are facing a national emergency, and all available forces

must be mobilized to save lives and bring the fires under control," he said in a statement.

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The Jerusalem Post reported that police arrested a suspect allegedly attempting to start a fire in a field. "A lighter, cotton, and additional incendiary materials were found in his possession. The suspect, in his 50s, was taken in for questioning," police said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the matter, "I continue to provide regular updates and assessments regarding the fire, together with the Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir and all security and rescue officials," noting, "We are working with all our might to protect the lives of citizens and control the fire."

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The Embassy of Israel to the USA said in a statement on X that the fires came the day the country celebrates its Memorial Day.

"These fires are not random. They are being encouraged and celebrated by terrorist-supporting accounts online," the Embassy wrote. "Evacuations from high-risk areas have begun, and international assistance has been requested."

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