

# SPAIN WILDFIRES

## Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Disasters

### CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

#### The wildfires season

Wildfires in Spain burned a total of 81,194 hectares in 2019. Local authorities reported 10,717 fires, of which 3,544 were bigger than one hectare. This includes 14 major wildfires that affected [more than 500 hectares each](#). In total, about [84,000 hectares burned in Spain during 2019](#), three times the surface area that burned in 2018.

Wildfires were partially caused by higher than usual temperatures, with a mean temperature of 15.9 degrees Celsius, almost [one degree above the reference period between 1981 and 2010](#). Three heat waves also caused the temperatures to rise above 40 degrees Celsius in some provinces during the summer. [Europe experienced its second-warmest year on record in 2019](#).

The biggest single displacement event was the wildfire that begun on 17 August in the Canary Islands, burning more than [12,000 hectares and leading to the evacuation of more than 9,000 people](#). This was the third blaze in Gran Canaria island in weeks.

#### Displacements linked to wildfires

The population was directly affected by 67 of these fires, which caused the evacuation of 17,654 people and the provision of [temporary shelter for 2,100 people](#) as of 6 November 2019.

Figure 1: Shows the temperature values in Spain during 2019 in comparison to the temperatures [between 1981 and 2010](#).

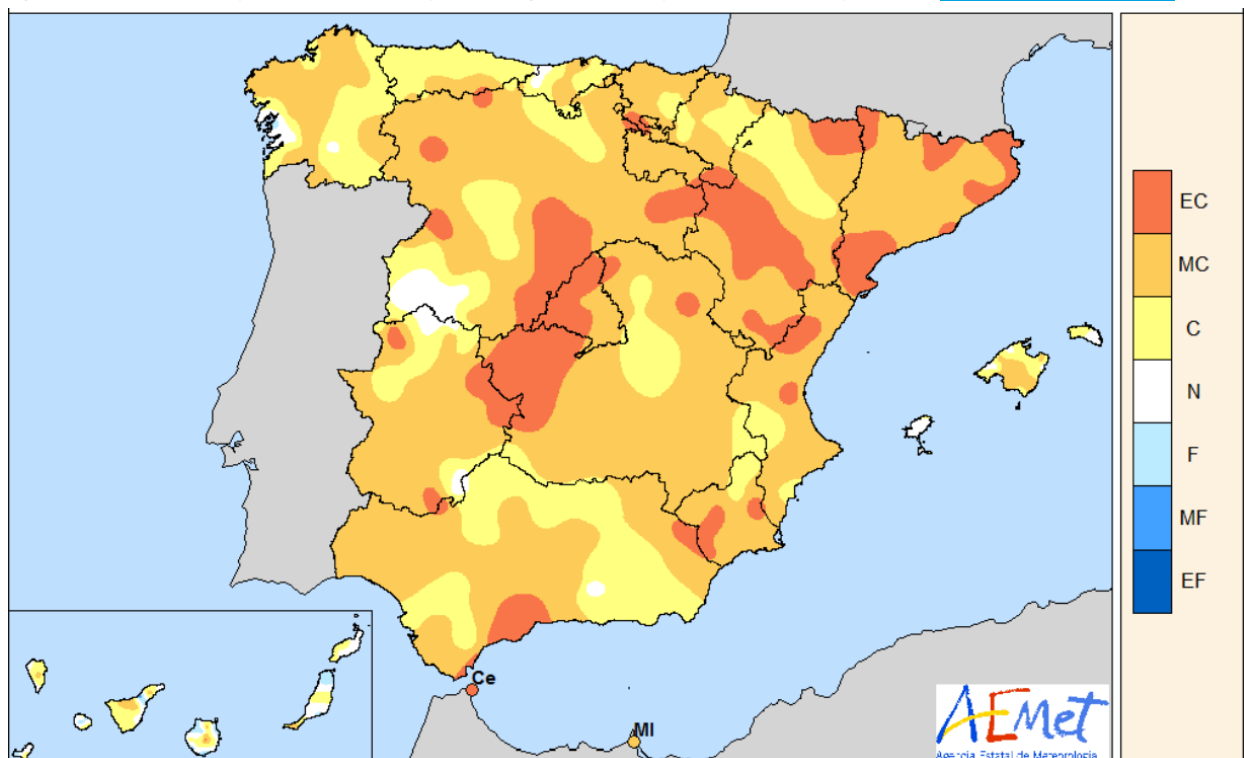


Table 1. 2019 summary of internal displacement in Spain by wildfires in 2019

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Total new displacements <sup>1</sup>  | 17,654 |
| Estimated IDPs as of 31 December 2019 <sup>2</sup>  | 0      |
| Houses destroyed <sup>3</sup>   | N/A    |
| People pre-emptively evacuated before events <sup>4</sup>   | 17,654 |
| People officially sheltered after events <sup>5</sup>   | 2,100  |
| <b>Notes</b>  |        |
| <sup>1</sup> This corresponds to new instances of total internal displacement related to the disaster event during the year                                     |        |
| <sup>2</sup> This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in a situation of internal displacement as of 31 December 2019 as a result of disasters |        |
| <sup>3</sup> This corresponds to the number of houses destroyed during the year   |        |
| <sup>4</sup> This corresponds to the number of people that have been detected as pre-emptively evacuated before the disaster events                             |        |
| <sup>5</sup> This corresponds to the total number of people that have been sheltered following the disasters events   |        |

## DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

IDMC's estimate of new displacement as a result of wildfires in Spain during 2019 is based on reports published by Spanish Civil Protection authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) as well as media articles on the main wildfires covering at least 10 main events. The information provided by the civil protection authorities is published as a monthly update on the wildfires during the course of a year. This update does not include detailed information at the event/wildfire level but rather provides aggregated information at the national level for the whole year up to the given month.

### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

In Spain, the main data source that allowed for the calculation of the final displacement estimates is the press release made public by the Ministry of Interior and Civil Protection at the end of the wildfire season. This press release provides information on the number of people evacuated, the major wildfires and the number of fires that directly affected the population, as well as information on the response by government institutions.

IDMC has complemented this information with the data published by MAPA in an update on fire extinction from 1 January to 30 November 2019. This includes accurate figures on burned hectares, number of fires and [major wildfires and a comparison with the trends of previous years](#).

The information available does not allow for a determination as to whether tourists are also included in the evacuation estimates for the Gran Canaria wildfire. Media reports, however, point out that the fire occurred away from tourist areas, suggesting that tourists were not as affected by the blaze and the evacuations.

The information provided by the Spanish authorities were complemented by the daily monitoring carried out by IDMC of news media, through which IDMC was able to identify and record ten displacement

events caused by wildfires throughout 2019. IDMC recorded 38 facts, including those for triangulation, affecting eight autonomous communities.

No information on returns is provided in the report published by Spain's civil protection authorities, but media outlets have reported that the majority of people were allowed by local authorities to return to their homes as of 21 August, once the blaze was under control and even before [the wildfire was declared extinguished](#).