



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 14, 2020

## Four People Arrested for Arson in Connection With Western Wildfires

Even though California Governor Gavin Newsom and other climate alarmists like to blame the recent spate of wildfires in the western United States solely on so-called climate change, another more sinister explanation for some of those fires has come to light. Thus far, at least four people have been arrested for suspected arson in connection with some of the massive wildfires.



Wildfires have been reported in at least 12 western states, with nearly a hundred of them currently burning. The states worst hit are California, with 25 fires currently burning; Washington, with 16 fires still burning; Oregon, 13 fires ongoing; and Idaho, 10 fires still burning. Oregon has had to evacuate nearly 500,000 residents due to fire danger in the past week. Thus far, an area roughly the size of New Jersey has been burned across the West.

With the political unrest in cities such as Portland, Oregon, rumors began to fly that Antifa or other left-wing anarchist groups may have been involved in setting some of those fires, especially given the group's history of setting things on fire in cities. But according to the FBI, none of those rumors have yet been confirmed.

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Reports that extremists are setting wildfires in Oregon are untrue. Help us stop the spread of misinformation by only sharing information from trusted, official sources.

[pic.twitter.com/ENc4c3kjep](https://pic.twitter.com/ENc4c3kjep)

— FBI Portland (@FBIPortland) [September 11, 2020](#)

Those rumors may also have been the result of a [tweet](#) by the Portland police aimed at demonstrators in the city, which read: “To those attending the demonstration tonight: Keep in mind the immediate risk the use of fire poses to community members. Since fire danger is very high right now due to high winds and the current dry climate, fire will spread quickly and could affect many lives.”

A subsequent tweet asked demonstrators to “demonstrate peacefully and without the use of fire.”

Whether or not Antifa is involved in any of the fire-setting, there have been four arrests on the West Coast for arson in connection with the massive and deadly fires in California, Oregon, and Washington.

In California, 37-year-old Anita Esquivel [was arrested](#) and accused of setting several fires along Highway 101 near Salinas. She was booked and placed in the Monterey County Jail with bail set at \$100,000.

The Washington State Patrol [reported](#) that it has apprehended at least two arson suspects who were



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allegedly lighting dry grass on fire near the intersection of State Road 512 and State Road 7 near Parkland.

In addition there is an [unconfirmed report](#) that a 36-year-old man was arrested near Pullyap, Washington, for allegedly starting a blaze that shut down State Road 167 temporarily. In that case, the suspect reportedly posted the fire live on Facebook and reported it to 911 himself.

In Oregon, a homeless man who was living in the woods is suspected of being one of the sources of the massive Almeda Fire, which has killed at least four people, with one person still unaccounted for. Forty-one-year-old Michael Jarrod Bakkela [was arrested](#) on two counts of arson and 15 counts of criminal mischief. When State Troopers found Bakkela, he was reportedly standing close to a fire that was about to engulf several homes.

And also in Oregon, Portland police [arrested](#) 45-year-old Domingo Lopez, Jr. for allegedly starting a brush fire with a Molotov cocktail. Incredibly, he was released on his own recognizance, only to be found [allegedly starting](#) six more fires just a few hours later. Lopez is now in police detention at a local hospital pending a mental health evaluation.

Many of the intense wildfires earlier this year in [Australia](#) this year were also reportedly begun by arsonists, as well as people just being careless with brush burning and fireworks. Similarly, one of the largest California blazes of this year, the El Dorado Fire in the San Bernadino Mountains, may have started because of fireworks used during a gender reveal party.

While Governor Newsom and others like to use these wildfires [as a prop](#) to tout their climate-change agenda, real people are being displaced and otherwise harmed not by climate change, but by shortsighted forest and land management at both the state and federal level. Outdated and ineffective laws such as the Endangered Species Act — which often prevent landowners from removing dry brush and dead or dying trees — are a much bigger cause of massive wildfires than alleged anthropogenic climate change.

Photo: Rego Quintero / iStock / Getty Images Plus

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