



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 28, 2023

Dozens Arrested for Arson in Connection With Greek Wildfires

While wildfires are not uncommon in Greece, the 2023 fire season has been unusually destructive, with more than 20 deaths reported and hundreds of square miles of grassland and forests reduced to ash in the Southern European country. While many are quick to blame man-made global warming for creating hot, dry conditions for such fires to occur, there appears to be another man-made reason for the overabundance of flames this year — arson.

BBC reports that at least 79 people have been arrested for allegedly setting fires. At least nine fires were set in only four hours on Thursday in the northern foothills of Mount Parnitha, which is just northwest of Athens.

Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias called out the arsonists on Thursday.

“Arsonist scum are setting fires that threaten forests, property and, most of all, human lives,” Kikilias said. “You are committing a crime against the country. You will not get away with it. We will find you and you will be held accountable.”

“Some ... arsonists are setting fires, endangering forests, property and above all human lives,” Kikilias added. “What is happening is not just unacceptable, but despicable and criminal.”

On Tuesday, firefighters discovered the charred corpses of 19 people, many of them children, near the northeastern port city of Alexandroupolis. The 19 victims are believed to be migrants. The bodies were found huddled together in what appeared to something of a last embrace.

“They realized, at the last moment, that the end was coming,” said coroner Pavlos Pavlidis, who examined the grizzly scene. “It was a desperate attempt to protect themselves.”

With Greece’s Mediterranean climate, wildfires are always a concern during the hot, dry summer months, but according to Kikilias, who also serves as the nation’s climate minister, this year has been “the worst since meteorological data have been gathered and the fire risk map has been issued in the country.”

Especially with dozens of arsonists roaming the countryside with lighters.

Even with those dozens of arsonists in custody, climate zealots can’t resist the opportunity to blame so-called climate change for the tragedy.



AP Images
Wildfire near Alexandroupolis



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“The role of climate change in heightening the risk of wildfires cannot be ignored. The world is, on average, 1.2°C warmer than in the pre-industrial climate, and this extra heat is bringing more frequent heatwaves and droughts. These weather conditions make the environment more fire-prone, and their increasing frequency has exposed already fire-susceptible regions such as the Mediterranean to greater risk of disaster,” The Conversation reported.

“Greece’s recent bout of extreme fire weather emerged from a heatwave that would have been at least 50 times less likely in the pre-industrial climate. Days with extreme fire weather are set to increase through to 2100 if emissions are not reduced,” the news source added.

Novelist Christy Lefteri was chagrined to find that, during a recent trip to Greece, locals were unwilling to blame climate change for the wildfires that ravage the region annually.

“What surprised me, however, was that any mention of the bigger issue, of the climate crisis and global heating, was shut down immediately and completely,” Lefteri [wrote](#) in *The Guardian*.

“But when it comes to climate breakdown, attributing blame to just one person, one corporation, one country, is impossible. In Mati, the fire didn’t rage so hard because someone had set off a spark — it raged so hard because years of global heating had dried up the land, part of a cascading set of unsustainable practices and inaction that had set our planet on fire,” Lefteri added.

Even with dozens of arsonists in custody, climate zealots will continue to blame climate change instead of the far more reasonable and observable cause of these wildfires — arson.



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