

STRIKING BAATIL

"In reality, We (Allah) strike baatil (falsehood) with the Haq. It then smashes out the brains of baatil. And, lo, it (baatil) suddenly disappears."
(Qur'aan)

Al-Haq

THE BAND OF HAQ

"There will ever remain a band from my Ummah fighting on the Haq until the Day of Qiyaamah. Those who oppose them and those who do not aid them, will not be able to harm them."
(Hadith)

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A DIVINE PINPRICK – A REMINDER OF GREATER PUNISHMENT FOR THE ISRAELI SAVAGES

Towns evacuated, drivers abandon vehicles as intense heat and high winds fuel huge brush fires

Beit Meir, Eshtaol, Mesilat Zion cleared of residents; at least nine wounded, including seven firefighters; Netanyahu takes part in meeting at ad hoc command center

By Charlie Summers, Emanuel Fabian and Lazar Berman 23 April 2025, 1:35 pm
Updated at 6:21 pm

Police evacuated several central towns and motorists were forced to abandon their vehicles on Wednesday as a number of brush fires rapidly spread amid soaring temperatures and high winds.

Eshtaol, Beit Meir and Mesilat Zion were cleared of residents as a result of the blaze in the Beit Shemesh area, and police shut down Route 38, a key traffic artery from the area to Jerusalem.

The fire initially broke out close to Moshav Tarum near the central city. Strong winds whipped up the flames as teams fought the blaze on the ground with support from aircraft. Police asked the public to exercise caution and stay away from the affected areas.

A Fire and Rescue Authority spokesman told The Times of Israel that nine people were lightly injured as a result of the blazes, including seven firefighters and two civilians. There was smoke in the air across Jerusalem, apparently from the fire some 25 kilometers away, causing air quality levels to plummet.

The Fire and Rescue Authority enlisted firefighters from six districts to quash the flames, and the IDF also joined the battle against the fires. Around 110 squads of firefighters, eight firefighting planes and a helicopter were working to extinguish the conflagrations north of Beit Shemesh.

In addition, fire engines belonging to the Israeli Air Force and Technological and Logistics Directorate operated alongside the Fire and Rescue Service and Israel Police.

An IAF aircraft also assisted with building an “aerial picture” of the fire while members of the Home Front Command were dispatched to assist with evacuating civilians from areas under threat.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu headed to the ad hoc command center set up by the Fire and Rescue Services to take part in a situational assessment.

A police spokesman said that the fires were spreading north in the direction of Route 1. Officers were scanning for hikers in areas threatened by the brush fires.

Meanwhile, flames from a second, separate blaze neared Route 6, a major highway, forcing police to close the road near the towns of Petahia and Pedaya.

Footage on social media showed crowds of people walking along the highway near Rehovot surrounded by heavy smoke. Twenty-five firefighting teams were taking part in the efforts to battle the flames in those areas, according to the Fire and Rescue Services. Train services were halted in the area as flames neared the tracks. The Israel Meteorological Service had warned of “extreme” weather on Tuesday and Wednesday, with the potential for record-breaking temperatures. The vast majority of forest fires in Israel are caused by humans and are usually the result of negligence. Israel experiences long, hot and dry summers, with conditions ripe for wildfires. Large blazes broke out in 1989, 1995, 2010, 2015, 2019, 2021 and 2023.

Climate models show that such large-scale blazes are getting more frequent and more fast-spreading, in part due to the climate crisis raising temperatures and causing even more extreme summers with drier conditions.

A scathing report by the state comptroller in July 2024 found that the National Fire and Rescue Authority had investigated only about 9% of the fires it handled in 2022 and 14% of those it dealt with in 2023. More than 50% of the files it opened between 2020 and 2022 were still open after a year.

The audit found that the authority operated without written and approved policy documents on how to run fire investigations, and that the existing policy was based neither on documented risk analysis nor optimal management. The report found that 75% of files opened by police on suspicion of arson offenses in 2019 to 2022 closed without indictments. During these years, 228 files were opened on suspicion of arson with a nationalist background, but indictments were only filed in a third of them.

Sue Surkes and Times of Israel staff contributed to this report.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/drivers-on-route-6-abandon-vehicles-as-intense-heat-and-high-winds-fuel-brush-fire>