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Three major wildfire fronts cause major devastation around Greece



A ring of wildfires northwest and north of the greater Athens area continued to rage on Friday along all main three fronts, which formed during the previous evening, resulting in the burning of forests, brush land and crops over thousands of hectares. The main north-south highway leading in and out of Athens was closed at the Afidnes toll booths, while more than a dozen communities and settlements have been evacuated.

Numerous residences and businesses were destroyed, while the power transmission operator in the country engaged in sporadic interruption of power to certain parts of the greater Athens area to avoid a widespread.

On Thursday evening, the Greek government announced that six regions in the southern half of the country have been placed in a state of emergency.

Besides the northern part of the greater Athens area, or northern Attica prefecture, a massive wildfire continued to burn through large swaths of pine forest and crops in the northwest part of large Evia island, in south-central Fokida prefecture, in Ilia

prefecture in the southwest, especially around the ancient Olympia site, as well as in extreme southern Mani, due south of the eponymous city of Sparta.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, expressed the support of the Mother Church and Himself personally to the Greek people affected by the wildfires, in a message was sent to the Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

The Ecumenical Patriarch stressed in his message that "…We express to the whole of the Greek territory the fervent maternal wishes of the Holy Church of Jesus Christ. May God, through the intercessions of the Most Holy Mother of God, save the clergy, the people, and the natural environment, for the most intense protection of which let us all strive as co-responsible for its protection."

In a related development, the Metropolitan of Corfu and Paxous, His Eminence Nektarios, following the Great Vespers on Thursday afternoon for the fore-feast of today's Transfiguration of our Lord, held at the Monastery of Pantokratoros, offered prayers for an end to the menace of wildfires in the country, as he was joined by attending clerics, nuns and the faithful.

Further south, the Metropolitan of Kalavryta and Aigialia, His Eminence Ieronymos, called on clerics in the Metropolis to offer intercessions and prayers for an end to the wildfires plaguing Greece.

St. David the Elder Monastery miraculously spared

On a positive note, the Metropolitan of Halkida, His Eminence Chrysostomos, on Thursday officiated at the Divine Liturgy for the feast day of the Divine Transformation at the historic Monastery of St. David the Elder, in northwest Evia.

The monastery was encircled by flames on Wednesday but miraculously was spared from the onslaught of the destructive wildfire in the area, which came as close as 1,500 meters from its walls.

Monks briefly evacuated the monastery but returned on Wednesday afternoon.

In statements to the Orthodoxia news agency, the Abbot of the monastery, Elder Gabriel, extolled what he called an indisputable miracle that took place during the crucial hours on Wednesday afternoon.