

France wildfires: City of Bordeaux faces evacuation

30th July 2026



Extreme heat and wildfires are becoming common across the globe. Europe is experiencing record-breaking temperatures and heatwaves. Many deadly wildfires are currently burning out of control across France and Spain. The biggest and

most serious of these is getting close to the southern French city of Bordeaux. The enormous fire is just 8 km from the city's outer limits. More than 2,500 firefighters are battling to keep the fires under control. On Monday, 17,000 residents were evacuated from the city. There are fears that tens of thousands more might have to leave. The "France 24" news site said the city had an "unsettling resemblance to the darkest days of the Covid-19 pandemic" with people wearing masks.

France's National Firefighters Federation said the kind of wildfire outside of Bordeaux has never been seen in France before. A spokesperson said the intense heat has created "fire clouds". NASA dubbed these the "fire-breathing dragon of clouds". They create their own winds, which means the fires suddenly spread in different directions. The firefighters' spokesperson said the fires created by the clouds were almost impossible to put out. He said: "We don't know how the blaze will spread. It is shifting non-stop. We cannot fight it directly." He said his firefighters were in "a David-versus-Goliath scenario". Bordeaux locals are now worrying about the future of their city.

Sources: france24.com / euronews.com

Writing

What can we do to reverse climate change. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

extreme heat / wildfires / temperatures / heatwaves / residents / evacuated / masks / firefighters / fire clouds / NASA / dragon / winds / David versus Goliath / the future

True / False

- 1) The article says wildfires are affecting every country around the globe. T / F
- 2) The article says all European countries have seen record-breaking heat. T / F
- 3) More than 170,000 people have evacuated from Bordeaux. T / F
- 4) The writer says Bordeaux looks like it did during the Covid-19 pandemic. T / F
- 5) France has had these kinds of wildfires before. T / F
- 6) The extreme heat from the wildfire is creating fire clouds. T / F
- 7) Fire clouds can create their own winds which fan the fire. T / F
- 8) A firefighter spokesperson said it was difficult to fight the fire directly. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. extreme | a. nicknamed |
| 2. deadly | b. worrying |
| 3. serious | c. locals |
| 4. enormous | d. made |
| 5. residents | e. chain of events |
| 6. kind | f. hazardous |
| 7. created | g. huge |
| 8. dubbed | h. fire |
| 9. blaze | i. lethal |
| 10. scenario | j. type |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of firefighting as a job?
- c) What do we need to do to live in the changing climate?
- d) What will you do if temperatures become really high?
- e) What three adjectives best describe this story?
- f) Why are firefighters facing a 'David-versus-Goliath scenario'?
- g) Have you ever faced a 'David-versus-Goliath scenario'?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the firefighters?

Phrase Match

1. Extreme heat and wildfires are
2. Europe is experiencing record-
3. deadly wildfires are currently
4. firefighters are battling to keep
5. 17,000 residents were
6. the fires suddenly spread
7. fires created by the clouds were almost
8. It is shifting
9. firefighters were in "a David-
10. locals are now worrying

- a. non-stop
- b. burning out of control
- c. the fires under control
- d. impossible to put out
- e. about the future
- f. becoming common
- g. evacuated from the city
- h. versus-Goliath scenario
- i. breaking temperatures
- j. in different directions

Discussion – Student B

- a) How hot is it where you are?
- b) What do you think of wildfires?
- c) What do you think of the record-breaking temperatures?
- d) How can governments stop the spread of wildfires?
- e) What would you do if wildfires were near your house?
- f) What would you take if you were evacuated?
- g) How is the changing climate affecting you?
- h) What advice do you have for people near the wildfires?

Spelling

1. eextrem heat and wildfires
2. becoming common across the geblo
3. record-breaking tesupetamerr
4. the nouormes fire
5. 17,000 residents were edcaeavut
6. the darkest days of the Covid-19 cdpinmae
7. the nneetsi heat
8. the fire-breathing dragon of uodslc
9. fires dulyndes spread in different directions
10. We don't know how the eablz will spread
11. We cannot fight it delciytr
12. a David-versus-Goliath carsnieo

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What does the article say is now common worldwide besides wildfires?
2.	How does the article describe temperatures in Europe?
3.	How far from Bordeaux's outer city limits is the wildfire?
4.	How many Bordeaux residents have left the city because of the wildfire?
5.	What did the France 24 website liken Bordeaux during the wildfire to?
6.	How many times before has France seen a wildfire like this?
7.	What did NASA call clouds made from fire?
8.	What do fire clouds create?
9.	What is the wildfire doing non-stop?
10.	What are Bordeaux residents worried about?

Speaking – Evacuate

Rank these with your partner. Put the things you would rescue first if you had to evacuate at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Passport
- Warm jacket
- Smartphone
- Medicine
- Cash
- Pets
- Water
- Jewellery