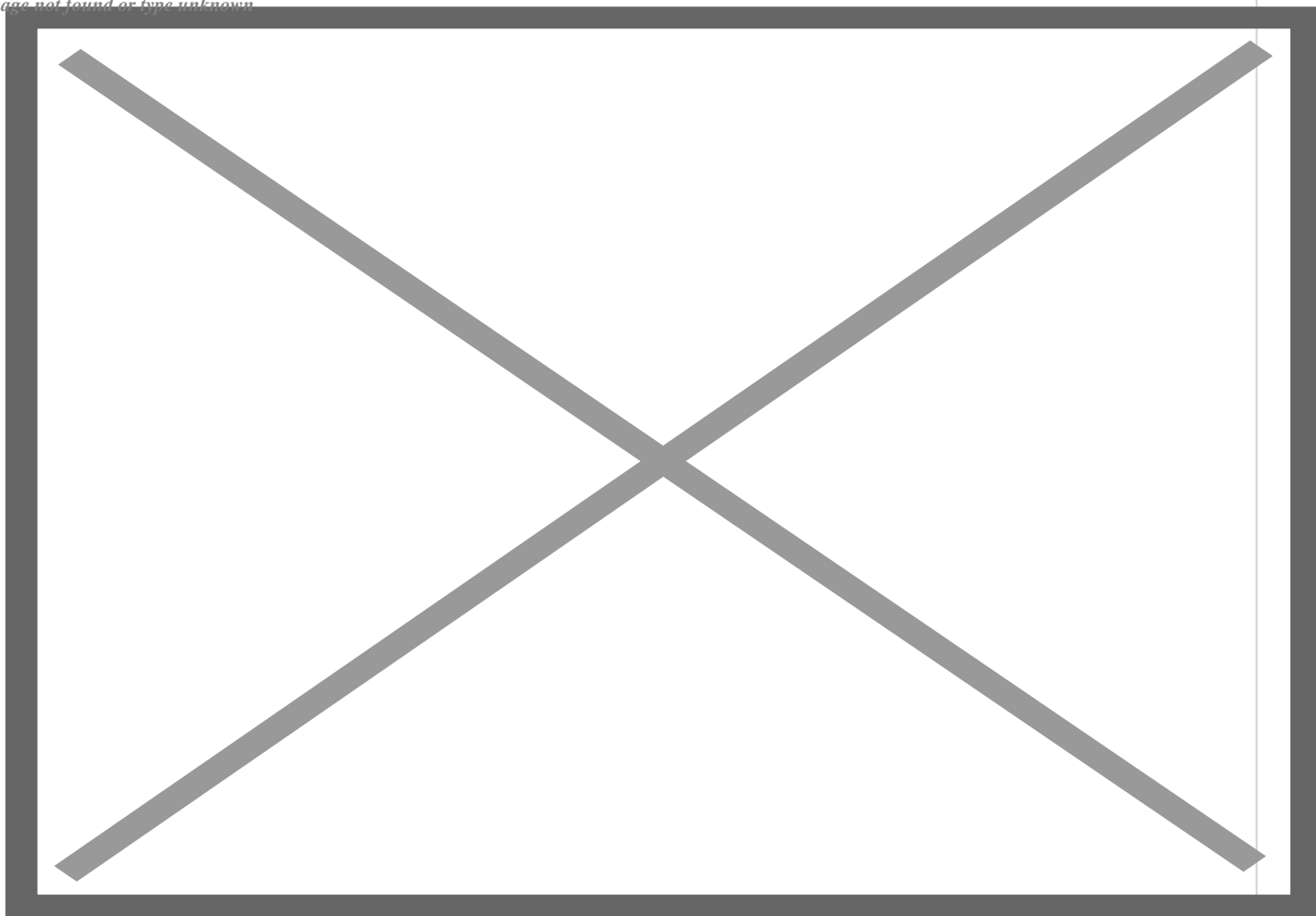


# *Residents evacuate as wildfire threatens homes near Athens*

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**Residents have been forced to evacuate as a wildfire on the outskirts of the Greek capital Athens threatened homes and power lines**

Athens, June 5 (RHC)-- Residents have been forced to evacuate as a wildfire on the outskirts of the Greek capital Athens threatened homes and power lines, a fire brigade official said. Fanned by strong winds on Saturday, the fire quickly spread across the slopes of Mount Hymettus which overlooks Athens, sending thick clouds of smoke over the southern suburbs of the city.

“The winds are very intense, we have damage in a few houses and some cars, no injuries,” a fire brigade official, who declined to be named, told the Reuters new agency. The Greek Civil Protection issued an emergency appeal via SMS for people to leave Ano Voula and surrounding areas as the flames spread to within metres of houses. Civil protection authorities also started precautionary evacuations in some parts of Glyfada about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Athens center.

More than 100 firefighters aided by six firefighting aircraft and four helicopters fought the blaze that started after midday in Glyfada, the fire brigade said.

Giorgos Papanikolaou, the mayor of Glyfada, said the blaze started at a high voltage electricity power station, the Athens News Agency reported. “The situation is very difficult and the wind does not help,” said Giannis Konstantatos, mayor of Ellinikon-Argiroupoli, a neighbouring municipality, who also heads a conservation group for nearby mount Imittos. “The atmosphere is suffocating, we have difficulty breathing,” he told the Athens agency.

Greece experienced its most severe heatwave in decades last summer – which authorities blamed on climate change – during which fires destroyed more than 100,000 hectares (247,000 acres) of forest and farmland, the country’s worst wildfire damage since 2007. More than 200 firefighters and technical equipment provided by European Union countries will soon deploy to Greece to help boost the battle against large wildfires in the country.

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<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/289783-residents-evacuate-as-wildfire-threatens-homes-near-athens>



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