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Rainfall relieves Greek firefighters; blaze continues near Athens

ATHENS, Greece - Rainfall in northern and central Greece helped firefighters contain two large forest fires Saturday, but a blaze that has destroyed more than 2,100 hectares (5,200 acres) of woodland near Athens continued for a third day.

The Fire Service said it had contained fires outside the central Greek cities of Larissa and Volos, helped by showers and cooler weather, after a weeklong heat wave with temperatures reaching the mid-40s degrees Celsius (up to 114 Fahrenheit).

Temperatures dropped to 33 Celsius (91.4 Fahrenheit) in most parts of the country Saturday.

Outside Athens, planes and helicopters dumped water on Mount Parnitha national park, where a wildfire burned pine forests and killed wild animals including foxes, tortoises and a protected species of deer.

State-run NET television said an incendiary device had been found at the scene of one of the Parnitha fires, and was being examined by police forensic experts.

Rogue land developers are often blamed for starting fires outside Athens, to exploit poorly enforced zoning laws,

Public Order Minister Vyron Polydoros said it was "totally out of the question" that burnt forest land on Parnitha would be used for development.

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