# Wildfires ravage Canada, forcing mass evacuations and posing challenges for firefighters



More than 100 wildfires are currently burning across Canada, causing extensive smoke and forcing thousands to evacuate their homes. This situation is particularly severe in Fort McMurray, Alberta, where a 51,000-acre wildfire is encroaching on the city, evoking memories of a devastating 2016 fire that required the evacuation of 90,000 residents.

Evacuation orders have been issued for several neighborhoods in Fort McMurray, and other areas are on high alert. Firefighters are facing extreme challenges due to thick smoke and difficult weather conditions. Alberta Wildfire Information Officer Josee St-Onge noted the detrimental effect of dry and windy conditions, despite forecasts of rain.

In addition to Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia are also grappling with massive wildfires. In Manitoba, blazes have consumed at least 78,000 acres and are threatening communities like Cranberry Portage, resulting in the evacuation of over 500 residents. Premier Wab Kinew acknowledged the hardships faced by evacuees in a recent statement.

In British Columbia, the Parker Lake Fire near Fort Nelson has expanded to nearly 21,000 acres, prompting evacuation orders for around 4,700 residents, including members of the Fort Nelson First Nation. Local construction company owner Rick Seidel stayed behind to assist in firefighting efforts, describing the scene as a "war zone."

Experts attribute the increasing frequency and intensity of these wildfires to climate change, which has led to longer droughts and higher temperatures. Last year marked Canada's most devastating fire season on record, and officials anticipate continuing challenges due to persistent dry conditions and "zombie fires" that have reignited from previous blazes.

The smoke from these fires has also affected air quality across the US, particularly from the Dakotas to Oklahoma. The situation remains dynamic, with ongoing efforts from fire services and authorities to manage and contain the fires while ensuring public safety.