# Evacuations increase as Guatemala’s Volcano of Fire erupts again, raising fears of disaster



The recent eruption of Guatemala's Volcano of Fire has prompted the evacuation of residents living on its slopes, highlighting ongoing concerns about volcanic activity in the region. This decision was made following an eruption that released columns of hot gas and ash into the atmosphere on Thursday, echoing the catastrophic effects of a previous eruption in 2018 that resulted in the deaths of 194 people and left another 234 missing.

Authorities initiated the evacuation to safeguard the lives of those living dangerously close to the volcano, which is located approximately 33 miles from Guatemala City. Juan Laureano, spokesperson for the National Disaster Reduction Coordinator, reported that at least 594 individuals were relocated to shelters across five communities in the Chimaltenango, Escuintla, and Sacatepequez departments. Given the continuing volcanic activity, Laureano mentioned that this number was likely to increase, reaffirming the vigilance required in the face of such natural disasters.

Residents have expressed their anxiety but support the proactive measures taken by authorities. Wilver Guerra, a 28-year-old resident displaced from El Porvenir, conveyed a sense of relief in the decision to evacuate, stating, “At first everything was normal, only fire in the morning when the volcano’s activity increased a bit, but it’s okay, better to evacuate in time.” The urgency for evacuation underscores the unpredictability of volcanic eruptions, particularly given the destructive potential of lahars—a dangerous mixture of ash, rock, mud, and debris that can devastate communities.

In addition to the ongoing evacuations, authorities have also taken steps to mitigate further risks by closing a key highway in the area, as well as suspending classes at 39 local schools. Such actions are reflective of the urgency surrounding the volcano’s activity, which is classified among the most perilous in Central America.

This eruption follows a similar event on Mount Etna in Italy, which occurred earlier this month. Despite its dramatic visuals—an impressive plume of ash and gas shooting several kilometres into the sky—Mount Etna’s eruption did not result in any reported injuries or significant damage. While the eruption was described as a “Strombolian eruption”—often characterised by moderate explosive activity—its classification and impact stand in contrast to the ongoing situation in Guatemala.

Both volcanoes serve as stark reminders of nature's unpredictability and the necessity for continuous monitoring and preparedness. Volcanologists categorise eruptions based on their explosive power, which influences the scale of devastation they can cause. Considering the historical context, particularly the aftermath of Guatemala’s 2018 eruption, it is crucial for local communities and authorities to remain vigilant as the dynamics of volcanic behaviour can shift rapidly, posing lingering threats to surrounding populations.

As this situation develops, the immediate focus remains on ensuring the safety of evacuees and monitoring the Volcano of Fire’s activity closely to preempt further disasters.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/guatemala-volcano-eruption-chimaltenango-etna-b2765128.html), [[4]](https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/americas/guatemala-volcano-evacuations-intl-latam/index.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/guatemala-volcano-eruption-chimaltenango-etna-b2765128.html), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/guatemala-volcano-of-fire-evacuations-eruption-b22fdf6c05426e3cef922d15b9cc5714), [[3]](https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2023/05/06/2003799281)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/americas/guatemala-volcano-evacuations-intl-latam/index.html), [[5]](https://www.euronews.com/travel/2023/11/13/mount-etna-is-europes-most-active-volcano-can-you-still-visit-during-an-eruption)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/guatemala-volcano-eruption-chimaltenango-etna-b2765128.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/guatemala-volcano-of-fire-evacuations-eruption-b22fdf6c05426e3cef922d15b9cc5714> - On May 4, 2023, Guatemala's Volcano of Fire erupted, prompting the evacuation of approximately 250 residents from the Panimache hamlet. The eruption sent red-hot rock and ash flowing down the slopes toward areas previously devastated by a deadly 2018 eruption. The volcano emitted ash clouds that could affect up to 100,000 people in surrounding communities. The 12,300-foot-high volcano is one of the most active in Central America, with the 2018 eruption resulting in 194 fatalities and 234 missing persons. The primary threat from the volcano is lahars, a mixture of ash, rock, mud, and debris that can bury entire towns. The disaster agency reported that such lahars were flowing down four of the seven gullies on the volcano’s flanks.
3. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2023/05/06/2003799281> - On May 4, 2023, Guatemala's Volcano of Fire erupted, leading authorities to evacuate over 1,000 people from five communities near the volcano. The eruption produced a high-temperature mix of gas, ash, and rock fragments that descended rapidly down the volcano's flanks. The ash column reached over 6,000 meters above sea level, with ash falling to the west and southwest of the volcano, away from the capital, Guatemala City. Authorities closed the RN-14 route on the volcano's slopes, which connects several towns to the colonial city of Antigua, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Residents were advised to cover water tanks to prevent contamination, wear masks to avoid inhaling ash, clear debris from roofs to prevent damage, and prepare evacuation kits for themselves and their pets.
4. <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/10/americas/guatemala-volcano-evacuations-intl-latam/index.html> - On March 10, 2025, Guatemala's Volcano of Fire erupted, leading authorities to evacuate nearly 300 families and warn that another 30,000 people in the area could be at risk. The eruption began overnight, with no immediate reports of casualties. The 12,300-foot-high volcano is one of the most active in Central America and last erupted in June 2023. The eruption produced gas and ash that rose far into the sky, prompting authorities to close schools in the vicinity and a key road connecting communities. The primary danger from the volcano is lahars, a mixture of ash, rock, mud, and debris that can bury entire towns. A 2018 eruption killed 194 people and left another 234 missing. The volcano is located 33 miles (53 km) from Guatemala's capital.
5. <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2023/11/13/mount-etna-is-europes-most-active-volcano-can-you-still-visit-during-an-eruption> - Mount Etna, Europe's most active volcano, is located on the east coast of Sicily, Italy. Despite its frequent eruptions, it is generally considered safe to visit, as most eruptions do not endanger those living in the area. However, visitors should be aware of potential ash fall, which can affect surrounding towns and occasionally lead to airport closures. The National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology of Catania monitors the volcano closely, using a system of cameras, sensors, and human controls to record and communicate tremors in real-time. Visitors are advised to hike with a local guide, especially past the 2,900-meter mark, and to notify their accommodation of their route. Skiers should avoid off-piste areas during eruptions.
6. <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2023/08/15/mount-etna-eruption-forces-closure-of-sicilys-airports-as-dozens-of-flights-are-cancelled> - In August 2023, an eruption of Mount Etna led to the closure of Catania airport and the cancellation of numerous flights. The eruption caused an ash cloud that disrupted travel to and from Sicily, with the airport initially closing at 2:38 am on Monday and reopening at 6 am on Tuesday. The eruption occurred just before Italy's biggest national holiday, Ferragosto, leading to significant travel disruptions. Catania airport, Sicily's largest, handles around 200 flights daily and is located approximately 50 km south of the volcano. The eruption prompted authorities to issue a 'pre-alert' phase, moving from warning level F0 to F1. Passengers were advised to check with airlines for updates and to be aware of potential delays, diversions, or cancellations.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Etna> - Mount Etna is an active stratovolcano located on the east coast of Sicily, Italy, in the Metropolitan City of Catania. It is one of the tallest active volcanoes in Europe, with a current height of 3,403 meters, though this varies with summit eruptions. Etna covers an area of 1,190 km² with a basal circumference of 140 km, making it the largest of the three active volcanoes in Italy. The volcano is situated above the convergent plate margin between the African Plate and the Eurasian Plate. Etna has a long history of eruptions, with the most recent occurring on June 2, 2025. The volcano is under intense surveillance by the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology of Catania, which monitors its activity using a system of cameras, sensors, and human controls to record and communicate tremors in real-time.