

FOREST FIRES

HEIGHTENED RISK IN THE TTA REGION

A Regional Resilience Challenge

STRATEGIC SIGNAL

At the height of the summer season, the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceïma region faces a heightened risk of forest fires, driven by extreme heat, dry vegetation and increased use of natural areas.

Beyond environmental and economic damage, forest fires directly threaten the lives and health of residents, visitors and response teams. They can cause deaths, burns, smoke inhalation, preventive evacuations and temporary displacement. This alert underscores the need to strengthen prevention, surveillance and coordination to protect people, natural resources and regional attractiveness.

HIGHLIGHTS

According to the provisional report of the National Agency for Water and Forests, as of 20 July 2026, the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceïma region had recorded 70 forest fires since the beginning of the year, representing 22.6% of the 310 fires reported nationwide. TTA ranks second in Morocco by number of fire outbreaks, after Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, which recorded 80. This highlights the pressure on regional forest areas and the need to maintain a high level of vigilance.

National overview as of 20 July 2026: Nationwide, the 310 recorded fires affected around 1,850 hectares. The published report does not specify the area affected in Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceïma.

Strengthening prevention: Lessons from 2022: fires affected 18,704 hectares in the region, or 82.2% of the 22,762 hectares recorded nationwide. Larache, Tétouan and Chefchaouen were among the most affected territories. For August and September 2026, ANEF urges forest users to strictly limit the use of fire and immediately report any outbreak.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT – LIKELY IMPACTS

A) Pressure on regional tourism attractiveness, particularly in natural and coastal destinations (Chefchaouen, Akchour, Cap Spartel, Talassemtane National Park and the Mediterranean coast), where access restrictions or closures could reduce visitor numbers during the peak summer season.

B) Risk of temporary disruption to strategic infrastructure (roads, power grids, telecommunications and water facilities) near forest areas, potentially affecting the continuity of economic activity.

C) Degradation of regional natural capital, which may affect ecosystem services—water resources, soil protection and biodiversity—that also support tourism and rural development.

D) Greater mobilisation of public resources, potentially requiring trade-offs between emergency spending and long-term investment in planning, prevention and resilience.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT – KEY WATCHPOINTS

- **Summer crowds and fire-start risk:** Heavy use of forest areas during summer, combined with high temperatures, increases the risk of human-caused fires. Leisure activities, picnics, uncontrolled flames and careless behaviour may increase outbreaks, especially in the busiest areas.
- **Exposure of infrastructure and tourist sites:** Areas classified at extreme risk include forests, transport routes and busy tourist sites, potentially amplifying the effects of a fire on mobility, economic activity and tourism. Temporary road closures, site evacuations or disruptions to tourism could directly affect the local economy during the peak summer season.
- **Persistent high-risk period:** According to ANEF, the coming weeks and the months of August and September remain particularly critical because hot, dry conditions persist.
- **Responsiveness of prevention and response systems:** Effective surveillance, early warning and inter-agency coordination will be essential to limit the scale and consequences of fires. Rapid detection and response are key to containing fires before they threaten people, infrastructure or sensitive natural areas.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen territorial resilience, the region should complement response mechanisms with greater anticipation, stakeholder coordination and protection of economic and environmental assets.

1. **Prioritise the most exposed areas:** Deploy enhanced surveillance based on hazard level, tourist traffic, critical infrastructure and visitor pressure in natural areas.
2. **Improve warning systems:** Expand geolocated SMS alerts, information panels, mobile apps and social media to warn residents and visitors quickly.
3. **Engage tourism stakeholders:** Involve accommodation providers, natural-site managers, guides and travel agencies in prevention and crisis-management arrangements.
4. **Protect strategic infrastructure:** Map the most exposed infrastructure, public facilities and economic sites to better target prevention measures and investment.
5. **Use forecasting tools:** Expand satellite data, remote sensing and forecasting to anticipate the most critical periods.
6. **Strengthen territorial resilience:** Embed fire prevention in regional planning and climate-adaptation policies, notably through sustainable forest management.
7. **Raise public awareness:** Intensify campaigns on responsible behaviour, as most fire outbreaks are human-caused.

SOURCES:

National Agency for Water and Forests (ANEF), provisional forest fire report as of 20 July 2026, July 2026.

European Commission – JRC/EFFIS, *Forest Fires in Europe, Middle East and North Africa* 2022, 2023.