

NERO Fire Brief

Summary

On July 9, 2026 at around 16:40 CEST (14:40 UTC), a vegetation fire started by the N-340A highway in the Almocáizar area, in the municipality of Los Gallardos (Almería, Spain). The region is characterized by mediterranean grasslands with occasional shrub cover and mild terrain with elevation differences on the order of 500 m. After a very wet winter, the area had experienced unusually hot and dry conditions during May and June, plus two consecutive heat waves occurred within the 15 days prior to the fire, leading to a high amount of available fuel.

The fire propagated very rapidly on the afternoon of July 9 due to very dry south-westerly winds (wind speed $\approx$ 20 to 30 km/h, relative humidity $\approx$ 15%), aligned with the terrain and accompanied by unusually high temperatures (on July 9, the maximum registered temperature in the area was 41.3°C and the minimum temperature was 24.3°C, both of which were maxima in the previous 10-day period). On July 10, wind decelerated and shifted to an East-South-East direction, opening up the fire left flank and facilitating its progression into a mountainous area, where fire spread was driven by terrain and wind together.

Satellites detected a short period of very intense fire activity in the evening of July 9 (19:00 - 21:00 CEST, local time), followed by extended intense fire activity all day on July 10, with a re-intensification between 12:30 and 15:30 (CEST, local time). Fire activity progressively diminished on July 11 and the fire was stabilized on July 12 at 11:00.

In total, the fire is estimated to have released more than 5 TJ in radiative energy and burned approximately 7,000 ha. It forced the evacuation of ca. 1,400 people and caused 13 casualties, plus 10 people missing as of July 13.

Date and Time	9 July 2026, 16:40 CEST
Wildfire Event Name	Los Gallardos
Location	Los Gallardos, Almería, Spain
Current Size (ha)	7,000 ha
Type	Surface fire
Weather Influence	Wind-driven
Fuels	Mediterranean grass with shrubs
Elevation (m asl)	200 - 800 m

Observed Fire Behavior	Rapid wind-driven fire spread on July 9, followed by combined wind and terrain driven fire spread on July 10. Fuel availability was very high due to an exceptionally rainy winter followed by very hot and dry conditions in May and June. On July 9, conditions were very hot and dry, and mildly windy.
Other Information	https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2x7441762o https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/wildfires-southern-spain-kill-12-emergency-agency-says-2026-07-10/ https://cadenaser.com/nacional/2026/07/12/cronologia-de-lo-que-sabemos-y-lo-que-no-del-mortal-incendio-de-los-gallardos-cadena-ser/
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Additional quantitative information on fire behavior is provided below. Figure 1 shows the estimated fire progression from satellite imagery. Figure 2 summarizes the fire radiative power (FRP) and fire radiative energy (FRE) as observed from the Meteosat Third Generation (MTG) satellite system, aggregated in 30-minute intervals. Figure 3 depicts the cumulative FRE.

Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7 show, respectively, the local wind direction, wind speed, relative humidity and temperature measured by the Spanish South-East meteorological network¹. Mean values and standard deviations were calculated using the 4 closest stations to the fire, located in the municipalities of Los Gallardos and Bédar.

¹ <https://redmeteo.ametse.es/>, Accessed on 12 July 2026

Finally, Figures 8 and 9 illustrate the observed fire behavior and the aftermath of the fire, respectively.

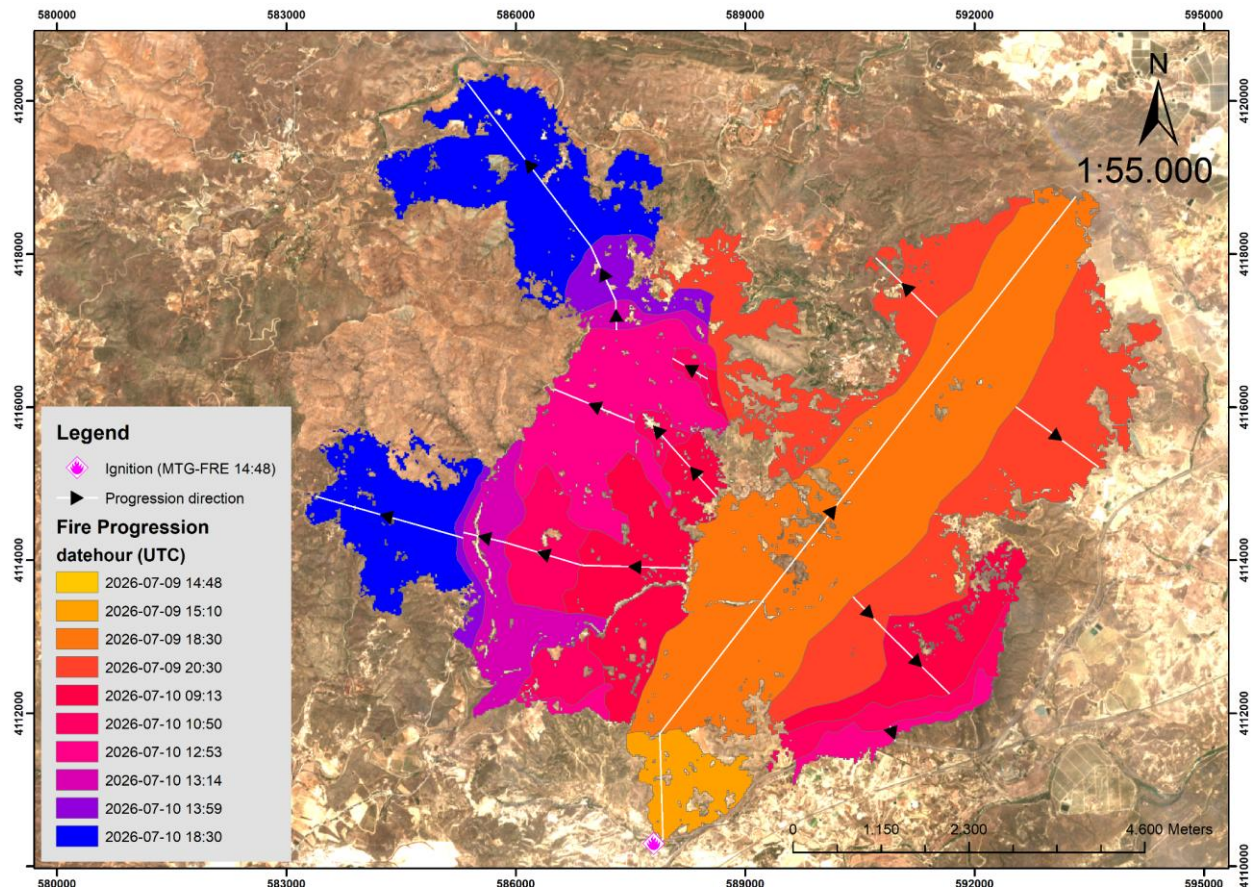


Figure 1. Fire progression estimated from satellite imagery (MTG, Suomi NPP, NOAA-20, NOAA-21, Sentinel-2). Times are UTC.

The EUMETSAT MTG Fire Radiative Energy (FRE) time series indicates two main periods of active burning during the Los Gallardos wildfire. Following ignition at 14:48 UTC on 9 July, FRE increased rapidly and reached its maximum value of approximately 0.36 TJ around 18:00 UTC (Fig.2), reflecting rapid fire spread (Fig.1) and high fire-line intensity. Peak wind speed was recorded during this period (Fig. 5). Fire activity subsequently decreased during the night but re-intensified on 10 July, when a second peak of about 0.29 TJ was observed in the morning. Thereafter, FRE gradually declined, with only low residual energy release detected after the evening of 10 July, indicating a progressive reduction in fire activity.

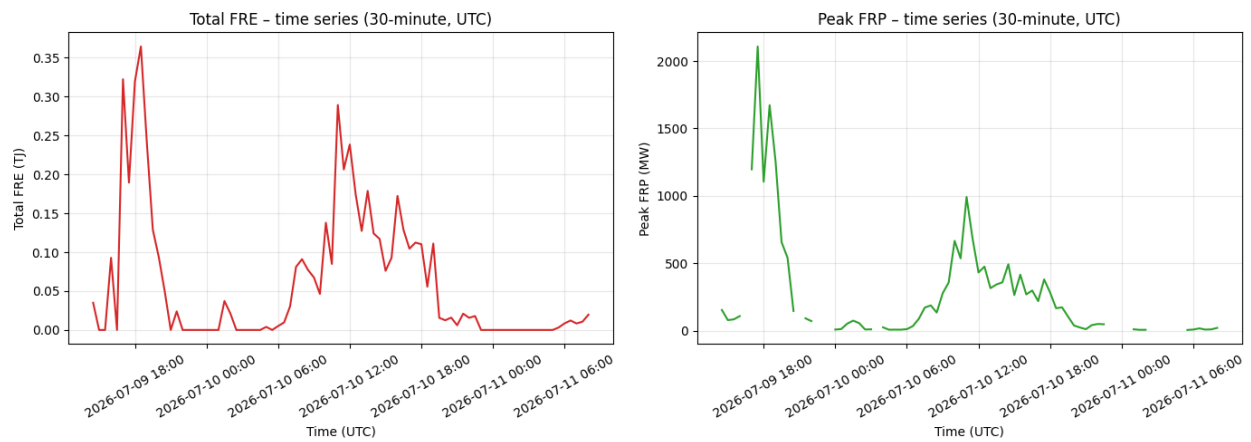


Figure 2. Time series of EUMETSAT MTG-derived Fire Radiative Energy (FRE) at 30-minute intervals (UTC) during the Los Gallardos wildfire.

The cumulative FRE profile indicates rapid energy release following ignition at 14:48 UTC on 9 July, reaching nearly 1.9 TJ by the evening. After a period of slower growth overnight, cumulative FRE increased sharply again during the morning and afternoon of 10 July, reaching approximately 5.0 TJ. Thereafter, the curve leveled off, with a final cumulative FRE exceeding 5.1 TJ, indicating that most of the fire's energy was released within the first 24 hours after ignition (Fig 3).

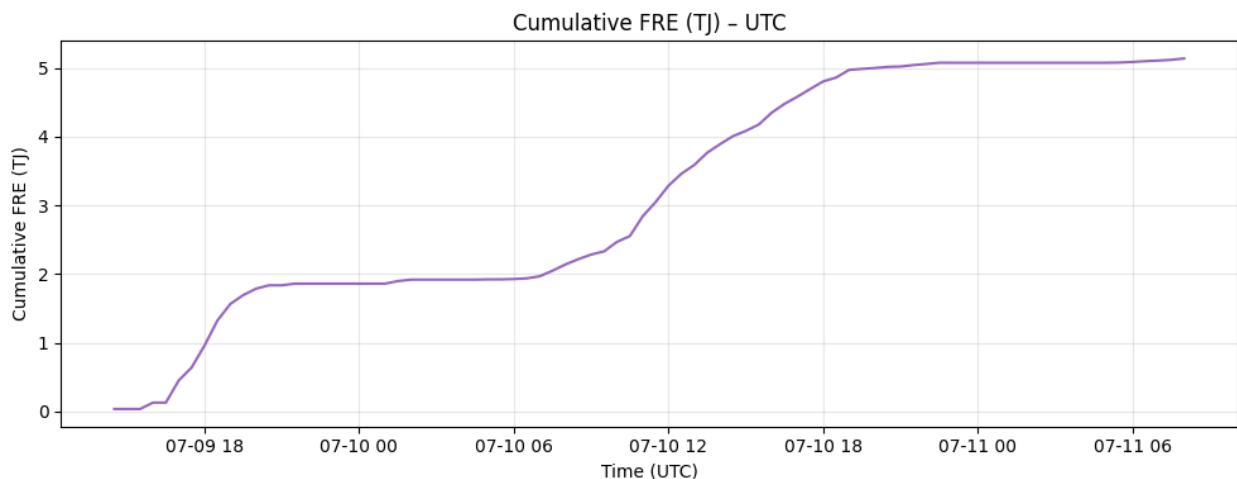


Figure 3. Cumulative EUMETSAT MTG-derived Fire Radiative Energy (FRE) during the Los Gallardos wildfire

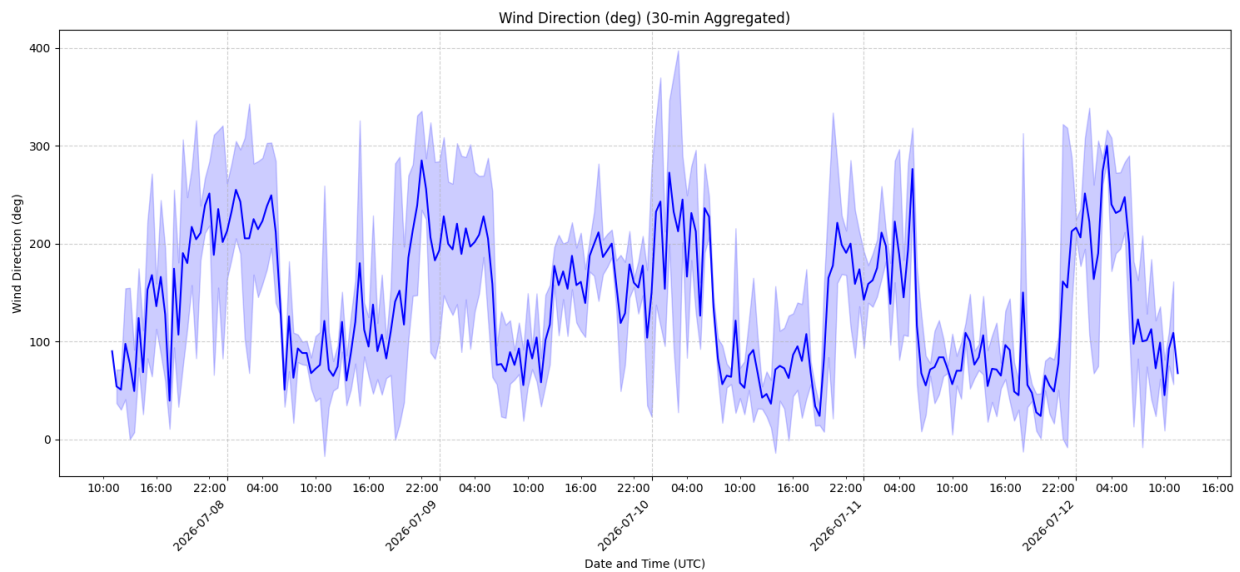


Figure 4. Wind direction evolution aggregated in 30-minute intervals. The plot shows the average (solid line) and standard deviation (shaded area) of the measurements made by 4 weather stations located in the vicinity of Los Gallardos and Bédar. Data source: <https://redmeteo.ametse.es/> [Accessed on 12 July 2026].

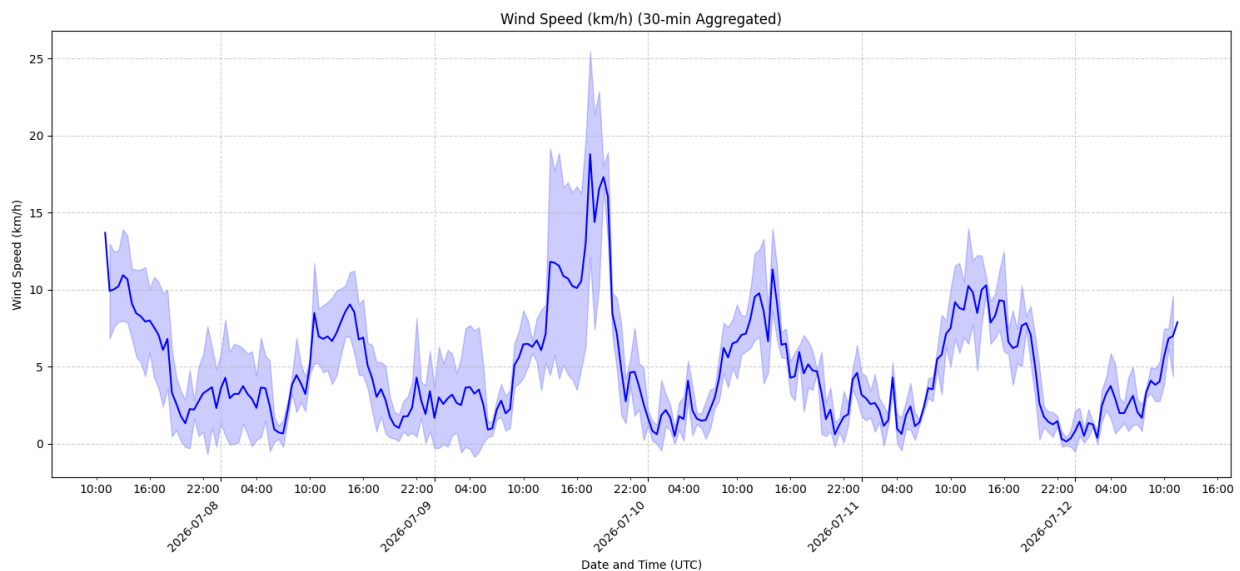


Figure 5. Wind speed evolution aggregated in 30-minute intervals. The plot shows the average (solid line) and standard deviation (shaded area) of the measurements made by 4 weather stations located in the vicinity of Los Gallardos and Bédar. Data source: <https://redmeteo.ametse.es/> [Accessed on 12 July 2026].

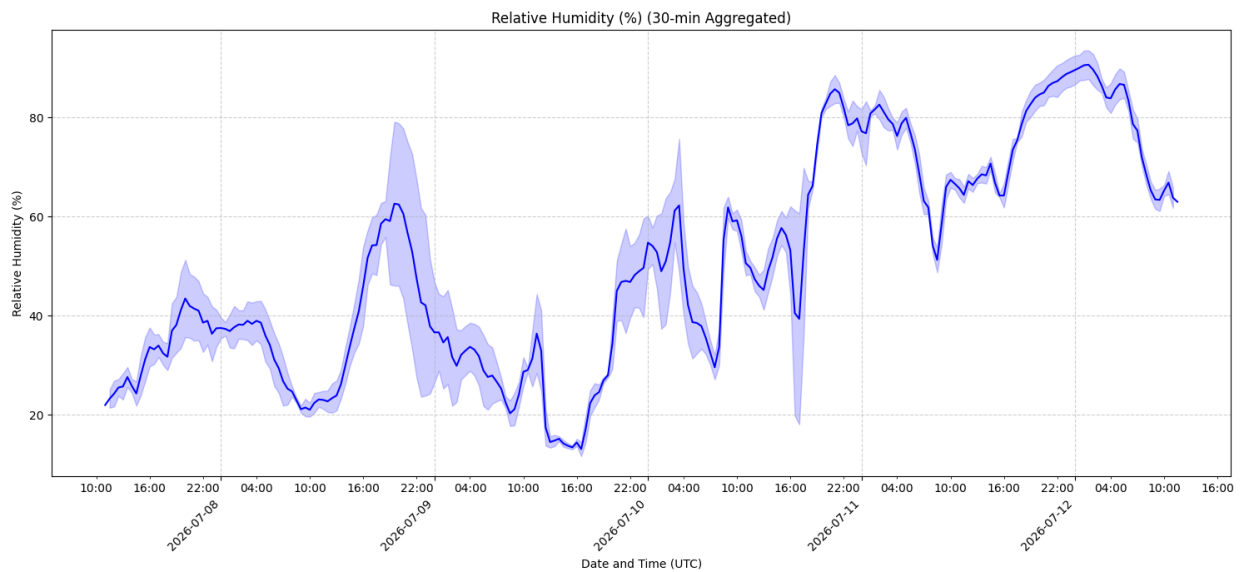


Figure 6. Relative humidity evolution aggregated in 30-minute intervals. The plot shows the average (solid line) and standard deviation (shaded area) of the measurements made by 4 weather stations located in the vicinity of Los Gallardos and Bédar. Data source: <https://redmeteo.ametse.es/> [Accessed on 12 July 2026].

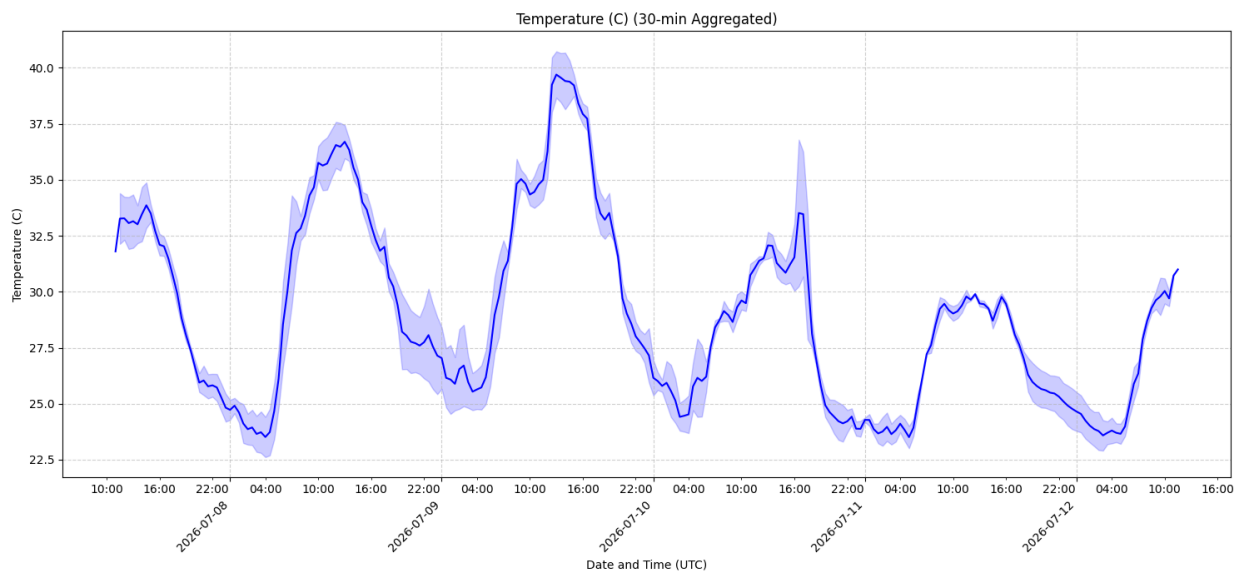


Figure 7. Temperature evolution aggregated in 30-minute intervals. The plot shows the average (solid line) and standard deviation (shaded area) of the measurements made by 4 weather stations located in the vicinity of Los Gallardos and Bédar. Data source: <https://redmeteo.ametse.es/> [Accessed on 12 July 2026].



Figure 8. Fire behavior observed in grassland and shrubby vegetation during the Los Gallardos fire (Credit: (a) <https://www.bbc.com/news>, (b) Violeta Santos Moura/Reuters).



Figure 9. Photographs of the burned area in Bédar. (Credit: (a) David Roth, El Correo; (b) Abel F. Ros, Árabia Press).