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Towering inferno:

Firefighters battle flames as the library at the University of Cape Town burns on Sunday after wildfires swept down Table Mountain.
/Reuters



Cape Town takes stock of damage

locking down its campus until at least Tuesday. Schools nearby have also been forced to suspend academic activity.

Residents in nearby suburbs were evacuated as toxic smoke and flames engulfed the area.

Government properties were also damaged, with a ministerial residence owned by the department of public works completely destroyed by the fire on Sunday afternoon.

“Thankfully, no-one was hurt and no-one was in the property at the time,” public works minister Patricia de Lille said in a statement issued on Monday.

She said family members of three members of the executive had been evacuated on Monday morning as the fires spread. According to the city, due to ongoing Covid-19 safety measures all people evacuated have arranged for their own alternative accommodation.

Cape Town mayor Dan Plato and Western Cape premier Alan

Winde visited UCT on Monday. The mayor said it was tragic that literary treasures had been lost at the UCT library, “but I have been informed that some of the most valuable works were saved by the quick activation of roller doors”.

EVACUATION

Plato said efforts to contain the fire are focused on the mountain above Vredehoek, where residents are being evacuated as a precautionary measure.

The city’s disaster risk management centre said there have so far been no injuries to civilians. However, four firefighters were injured.

The city’s resources are usually stretched at this time of the year as it battles fires around the metro.

The fire season in Cape Town extends from November to May and the dry and windy summers fuel the wildfires.

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