

**Report on the actions taken by the Cyprus Police to combat the wildfire that broke out on 23 July 2025, in the mountainous (rural) area of Lemesos**

The present Report/Evaluation was prepared on the instructions of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, following the meeting held on Sunday, 27 July 2025, at the Presidential Residence in Troodos.

**Introduction**

On Wednesday, 23 July 2025, at approximately 13:30, the Pachna Police Station was notified by a local of Malia village that a fire had broken out at the junction between the villages of Dora and Arsos. At 14:00, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer of Lemesos Fire Stations informed the Assistant Police Director (Operational) of Lemesos that a limited-scale fire had broken out in the area of Malia village, heading towards the residential area of the village, requesting the cut off of the roads leading to the villages of Arsos, Malia and Omodos. The Police responded immediately to both calls.

**Lemesos District Police Directorate – Crisis Management Centre**

At 14:45 of 23 July 2025, the Crisis Management Centre (CMC) of the Lemesos District Police Directorate (LDPD) was set up under the supervision of the District Police Director.

Following communication with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer of the Lemesos Fire Stations, who reported that there was a risk of the wildfire spreading towards the villages of Omodos and Arsos, the Assistant Police Director (Administration) went to the Forward Command Post (FCP) of the Fire Service (FS) and assumed the role of liaison officer on behalf of the Police. Simultaneously, the Deputy Head of the Lemesos Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was asked to initiate an investigation into the causes of the fire, whilst personnel from the LDPD was recalled to duty.

It is noted that the CMC was under the supervision of the Lemesos District Police Director between the hours of 14:45 and 21:20, and at 21:20 he went to the LDPD, whilst the Chief of Police assumed supervision until 11:00 of 24 July 2025. At 14:30 of 24 July 2025, supervision was assumed by the Deputy Chief of Police.

At 14:45, following a request by the Chief Fire Officer, instructions were given to the Commander of the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) for the deployment of the vehicle - Police Forward Command Post (PFCP) to Lemesos. The unit was installed at a designated location at 17:00. The PFCP was staffed by members of the ERU. In addition, PFCP reinforced the LDPD with personnel and two minibuses to assist in the evacuation of the villages affected by the wildfire.

### **Police Aerial Assets**

At 14:53, the CMC was informed by the FS that the “IKAROS II” plan had been activated. At 16:50, the Aerial Firefighting Unit of the National Guard requested assistance from the Police Air Operations Unit, which responded with two helicopters. The two helicopters were used for coordination purposes and were also deployed the following day, 24 July 2025, for firefighting.

### **Establishment of scene security, Road closures and Evacuation operations**

Upon the arrival of Police personnel in the area, road closures were effected based on the direction of the wildfire. In coordination with the Civil Defence (CD) and other relevant Services, Communities, monasteries, and camping sites were evacuated.

It is noted that, due to the wildfire spreading towards the village of Lofou and the entrapment of 30 individuals therein, a request was made by the FCP and CD for the Police to assist in the evacuation of the village. Efforts to rescue those trapped lasted from 20:00 of 23 July 2025 until the early hours of 24 July 2025.

At 19:47, a Police officer stationed in the village of Silikou was instructed to spot a safe route from Lofou to Alassa in order to be used by residents for evacuation purposes. En route to Alassa, the officer encountered dense smoke and was forced to return, towards the direction of Trimiklini. The vehicles which were following, were also led towards Trimiklini, and the officer cut off the road for a duration of two and a half hours. The Trimiklini–Alassa road was closed in both directions by Police patrol vehicles.

### **Victims**

At 21:00, a member of CD, while heading to Monagri – after Alassa and before the shooting range – spotted a vehicle on fire. Inside the vehicle, he noticed an individual. He informed the Police, which dispatched members of Lemesos CID to go onsite for investigation. Preliminary findings revealed that the vehicle, with the registration number HYK965, was registered in the name of Maro Filippidis. Two bodies were found inside the burnt vehicle. On 29 July 2025, DNA analysis confirmed that the deceased were Dimitris and Maro Filippidis. The Lemesos CID is investigating a case of Unnatural Death.

### **Injured persons**

Due to the large scale of the wildfire, four (4) individuals sustained injuries:

- I. A.Ch., while driving her vehicle on the Platres-Lemesos road, near the shooting range in the village of Monagri, on 23 July 2025 at around 20:00, suffered burns to her face, neck, and right upper limb, as well as irritation to her airways when she was surrounded by fire.
- II. M.K., who on 23 July 2025 at around 14:00, while vacuating her house in the village of Malia, suffered first-degree burns on her right hand.
- III. Ch.S., who on 23 July 2025 at around 17:00 also suffered burns while vacuating from his house located between the villages of Vouni and Koilani.

- IV. P.D.'s health condition worsened (he had chronic respiratory problems) due to the fire fumes he inhaled while he was at his house in the village of Vouni, and was admitted to hospital for precautionary reasons.

### **Deployment of personnel**

In response to the wildfire, the active-duty personnel of the LDPD were deployed and remained on duty from 07:00 on 23 July 2025 until 07:00 on 24 July 2025. A recall of off-duty personnel was also initiated.

In total, 145 members of the Police Force were engaged, and 54 Police vehicles were deployed, including buses.

Additionally, the LDPD was reinforced with personnel from the Traffic Department of Police Headquarters and the ERU. On 24 July 2025, further reinforcements were provided by the Larnaka District Police Directorate and the Port & Marine Police.

### **Police announcements**

At 14:37, the Police Press Office issued its first announcement concerning the cut off of the Malia-Omodos and Malia-Arsos roads due to the wildfire. At the same time, the Press Office operated on a 24-hour basis, responding to telephone enquiries from members of the public and providing statements to television and radio stations. Several announcements were issued, while important statements from other Services were also reiterated on social media.

### **Positions – Views – Recommendations**

From the outset, the Police took all necessary measures to secure the areas where wildfire broke out, effecting road closures and ensuring access for FS vehicles, whilst other Services/Departments participated in firefighting efforts. In coordination with other

Services, the Police also contributed to the protection of civilians and assisted in the evacuation of villages, monasteries, and camping sites.

An investigation is currently being conducted by the Lemesos CID into the origins of the wildfire, as well as the circumstances of the unnatural death of Mr and Mrs Filippidis.

Based on the observations made, the following recommendations are submitted:

1. Access to the FCP should be restricted to individuals who are unassociated with firefighting operations or crisis management.
2. All public communication should be handled by a single Press Officer alone, who will act on behalf of all Services involved.
3. The Special National Plan "PYRSOS" should be reviewed and updated accordingly.