



[www.barbarymacaque.org](http://www.barbarymacaque.org)

1<sup>st</sup> August 2020

*Wildfire destroys over 7,500 ha of Bouhachem Forest, Morocco, destroying people's livelihoods and killing hundreds of endangered macaques*

Over half of the Bouhachem forest in north Morocco has burned down due to wildfires, killing hundreds of Barbary Macaques, livestock as well as damaging surrounding villages.

The blaze, which started on July 25th, continues and has already wiped out 7,500 ha - a large part of the forest. Morocco is experiencing its worst drought for 40 years, and like much of the Mediterranean has faced rising temperatures over that period, consistent with its high risk to climate change. Numerous fires have already occurred in Morocco this summer.

Despite the superhuman efforts of the forestry department, army and villagers living in the area, many of the surrounding villages are damaged, crops burned, and livestock killed. Many eyewitnesses saw multiple macaques running from the flames. We are concerned that hundreds of the 4,000 macaques in Bouhachem have either been killed or will die from burns and/or smoke damage to their lungs. As a result of the fire, most of their food sources have disappeared and will not regenerate fully until it rains, hopefully in September or October.

Barbary Macaques are the only macaque outside Asia and the only primate found north of the Sahara. Bouhachem Forest is one of the few areas in Morocco where these macaques are safe from poaching and unmanaged tourism.

Barbary Macaque Awareness and Conservation (BMAC) is coordinating fundraising for this emergency. Barbary Macaque Conservation in the Rif (BMCRif) is coordinating and transporting the Moroccan public's donations of food and other necessary supplies from within Morocco to help the villagers who need help most. BMCRif is also monitoring the surviving macaques.

BMCRif works with the UK NGO BMAC. Together we have been working with the communities around Bouhachem since 2009. Our shared mission is to conserve the globally-Endangered Barbary Macaque and its habitat and to promote knowledge of the species. We work with communities sharing habitat with the macaques in a holistic, practical and inclusive way.

Photos of the fire, damage to surrounding villages and affected macaques are available.

For any enquiries, please contact:

Arabic: Ahmed El Harrad, President, BMCRif + 0662535042

English: Dr Siân Waters, Advisor, BMAC +(0) 1495 722117  
Email: [sianwaters@gmail.com](mailto:sianwaters@gmail.com)

French: Ahmed El Harrad, President, BMCRif + 0662535042

Spanish: Ahmed El Harrad, President, BMCRif + 0662535042

Further information:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/03/water-supply-fears-morocco-hit-worst-drought-1980s>

[https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/15725-WB\\_Morocco%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf](https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/15725-WB_Morocco%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf)

<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/morocco/climate-data-historical>