Canadian Armed Forces deployed to fight wildfires

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have been deployed to help the Northwest Territories as wildfires threaten multiple communities in the area, several of which are under evacuation orders.

It comes after the territorial government requested assistance from the feds due to growing difficulty fighting wildfires.

The CAF will assist with "firefighting efforts, air transportation, and planning, co-ordination and logistics," tweeted Minister of National Defence Bill Blair.

Minister of Emergency Preparedness Harjit Sajjan tweeted on Saturday afternoon CAF members "are mobilizing and ready to assist" as wildfires approach some northern communities.

Due to the increased wildfire threat, several communities along the boundary between the Northwest Territories and Alberta have been ordered to evacuate.

The town of Fort Smith, N.W.T., with a population of approx. 2,500, declared a state of local emergency on Saturday and asked its residents to evacuate in a calm manner, according to the town's website.

The post says residents had eight hours to leave through Highway 5 after a recommendation by Parks Canada. Parks Canada and the territorial government say as of Saturday they are closely monitoring the highway and are anticipating road closures depending on fire behaviour and smoke conditions.

Smith's Landing First Nations and the region around Slave River must also leave due to nearby fires.

Other areas in the Northwest Territories such as North Prosperous Lake, North Prelude Lake and all of River Lake are under evacuation orders and residents and visitors are being advised to leave their homes no later than Monday morning, according to the government's public safety website.

The wildfires prompted another evacuation order in Fort Fitzgerald, Alta.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo issued the order on Saturday as strong winds from the west were expected to push Wood Buffalo National Park's wildfire east, close to communities, according to Parks Canada.