

End seen for Southern California wildfire

by UPI

MALIBU, Calif. -- Firefighters in the posh Southern California city of Malibu said a weekend wildfire that destroyed 53 houses was likely to be extinguished Monday. Los Angeles County Fire Chief Michael Freeman said Sunday night that planning during the past week was part of the success in the quick containment of the fire that started early Saturday and said the loss of homes could have otherwise been five times higher, the Los Angeles Times reported. Freeman said the fire was 70 percent contained and had scorched some 4,720 acres. Apart from the 53 houses destroyed, 34 others were damaged, the report said. Fire investigators who asked not to be identified told CNN the fire appeared to have been started by a group of people who lit a campfire at the end of a dirt road. During the weekend, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger renewed a state of emergency he declared for last month's wildfires, which burned more than 508,000 acres in several counties and forced 1 million people from their homes.

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