

Six more dead from California wildfires

by UPI

SAN DIEGO -- U.S. President George Bush visited areas affected by the Southern California wildfires as the death toll from the blazes rose by six. The death toll rose with the discoveries of six bodies -- a married couple from Escondido, Calif., and four suspected illegal immigrants -- apparently killed by the fires, the Los Angeles Times reported Friday. Bush on Thursday made a visit to part of the area affected by the fire, meeting with evacuees and firefighters from the fire-damaged San Diego community of Rancho Bernardo. He hugged many of the evacuees and promised the victims of the fire, which destroyed 1,775 homes, would receive federal help. "To the extent people need the help of the federal government, we will help," Bush said. The latest victims moved the overall death toll to seven. Additionally, three people died in car accidents related to the fire and seven evacuees have died in San Diego County. Firefighters reported progress against the blazes Thursday as calmer winds and higher humidity made conditions less favorable for the spread of the fires. "This is really allowing us to make great progress and really attack those fires," said Daniel Berlant, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Rescue workers said much of the danger posed to homes and businesses by the fire has subsided, the Times reported.

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