

Hawaii wildfires death toll expected to rise, governor says

KAHULUI, Hawaii, Aug 10 (Reuters) - The death toll from a wildfire that has turned the resort town of Lahaina on Hawaii's Maui island into smoldering ruins was expected to rise "very significantly" on Thursday, according to Hawaii Governor Josh Green.

Officials have said at least 36 people have died after the fires broke out late on Tuesday, and scores more have suffered burns, smoke inhalation and other injuries. Search and rescue efforts continue, and thousands of people have fled the area, into emergency shelters and off the island.

"We do know that more people will have perished," Green told CNN ahead of a press conference planned for Thursday evening. "You'll see the numbers go into the 40s today at the least."

The fires reduced entire neighborhoods to ashes on the western side of the U.S. island. Lahaina is one of Maui's prime attractions, drawing 2 million tourists to the island each year, or about 80 percent of the island's visitors.

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