

“1000 year rain event” in Dallas, Texas, is a sign of things to come

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The Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, (DFW) metroplex experienced a “thousand-year rain event” late Sunday through early Monday morning, with torrential rain flooding bringing the region of more than 7.6 million people to a standstill, with many being stranded in their cars on flooded roadways and one death recorded so far, a 60-year-old woman swept away in the floodwaters. On Monday, DFW International Airport grounded all flights due to heavy rain and thunderstorms, with hundreds of flights canceled or delayed.

DFW International recorded a total of 9.19 inches (23.3 cm) of rain, the second heaviest 24-hour period rainfall on record, only surpassed by September 4-5, 1932 when 9.57 inches (24.3 cm) of rain fell. Some parts of the city, according to AccuWeather, received in excess of 15 inches (38.1 cm) of rain. The amount of rain in Dallas exceeded the 6.53 inches of rain received in the preceding four months.

The flash flood followed months of extreme drought brought about by a record lack of rain—the city experienced a 67-day streak during which no measurable rain fell, the second longest streak in the city’s history—and unusually high temperatures which persisted until the deluge.

Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins declared a disaster on Monday requesting assistance from the federal and state governments.

An unknown but presumably large number of cars were damaged by the floods with I-30 being blocked with floodwater. The Dallas Police Department reported 22 squad cars were damaged or completely destroyed by water.

The “thousand-year” designation means that the event has a 0.1 percent chance of happening per year, but with climate change this has been made much more

likely. St. Louis, Missouri, on July 26, eastern Kentucky on July 27, eastern Illinois on August 1, and Death Valley, California on August 5 all experienced “thousand-year rain events” which is far from normal. These devastating storms, as the *Washington Post* wrote, all “stemmed from stationary fronts and anomalously-humid air masses.” These rare events have become normal as capitalist-induced climate change has created a warmer and wetter planet, on average, which has created a trend towards greater climate extremes.

Apartments and low-lying areas were flooded across the city, with Old East Dallas experiencing 4 feet or more of floodwater, with many houses being ruined by water damage. Benito Chavez, 61, told the *Dallas News* that “it was like a little Katrina, right here,” referring to the 2005 hurricane that devastated New Orleans.

Chavez spent much of Tuesday removing belongings from his family’s home soaked by the deluge. Questions were raised on the possible role of construction contract companies working nearby that may have obstructed storm inlets during construction, and failed to remove them during the storm, causing the flooding to be worse, though the city denied this.

The storm drainage system for Dallas is not designed for weather events such as this and has been overwhelmed previously many times in less severe rains.

A power outage resulted from the flooding covering over 36,000 buildings according to PowerOutage US. The Trinity River, which flows through the center of Dallas from the west to the southeast, reached moderate flooding levels, peaking at nearly 39 feet according to the National Weather Service, receding into the normal range only around mid-day Wednesday.

In some places, sanitary sewers were overwhelmed with storm water, forcing sewage onto roads and city blocks, presenting an immediate public health hazard in the areas it escaped as well as complicating sewage treatment, which is only designed to handle a certain volume. The city said that the spills did not affect the water supply but stated that residents using wells should boil their water or use distilled water for all personal uses.

The inundation of sanitary sewers is caused by crumbling infrastructure underfunded for decades. Specifically, inadequate maintenance allows breaches to form in sewage pipes and around manhole covers so that storm water can force its way in.

To put it simply, despite the role climate change played in fueling the storm, the flooding was preventable, and as such, not a natural disaster.

DFW alone had a Gross Domestic Product of \$534.8 billion in 2020 according to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis. If it were a country, it would place 23rd by GDP, higher than Poland, a country of nearly 40 million people, or Iran, a country of 84 million people. The issue is not a lack of money for the necessary repairs in order to update drainage systems and sewage systems to make the city safe from floods and other disasters, but rather who controls it.

Dallas is home to 15 of the 1,000 richest people on the planet according to *Forbes*, including oligarchs Alice Walton (\$65.3 billion), heiress to Walmart and the 18th richest person on the planet; Jerry Jones (\$10.6 billion) who owns the Dallas Cowboys American football team and is also the majority owner of the gas company Comstock Resources Inc., which price-gouged freezing Texas residents last year; and founder of Beal Financial Corporation and Beal Bank, Andrew Beal (\$9.9 billion).

The whiplash from drought to flooding is itself a product of climate change, brought about by decades of pollution from capitalist industry owned by competing nationally based financial elites.

Similar weather events are being experienced around world, such as the heat wave across Europe which killed 1,700 in Spain and Portugal alone, intense drought in central Europe, rampant fires in California, as well as the Texas 2021 freeze which killed 700. Every government, controlled by the very same capitalist oligarchs, has done nothing to stem, let alone

reverse the climate change, or even to fund the necessary infrastructure to adapt, the Biden administration included.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has estimated that \$2.6 trillion over 10 years is required to repair crumbling US infrastructure. Instead, tens of billions is being poured into the US-NATO-instigated war against Russia in Ukraine, which threatens nuclear war, while \$858 billion is being sunk into the US military this year to prepare for direct war against China, Russia and other potential rivals.

The well-being and very lives of billions of people are subordinated to the interests of the financial oligarchy, who have a stranglehold over society and whose social interests are diametrically opposed to those of workers on every major point, and can only be broken through a mass movement of the working class for socialism.



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