

“Once in a 1,000 year” rain triggers flash flooding in Vermont and New York’s Hudson Valley, killing 1

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On July 9 and 10, in the wake of four consecutive days of global record-breaking heat, the New York Hudson Valley and the state of Vermont faced devastating flash flooding. The flash floods were triggered by historic downpours, described as “once in a 1000 year” events. The latest disasters in the United States are a sharp warning of the worsening effects of climate change, caused by the profit-driven exploitation of the environment under capitalism.

As a result of prior rainfall, the grounds in Vermont and the Hudson Valley region were already saturated with water, meaning that the rainwater would take a longer time to subside. The National Weather service warned of “Significant to catastrophic flooding” ahead of the storms. Much of Vermont was placed on Flash Flood warnings. Continuing into the morning of July 11, the Vermont state Capital, and many of Vermont towns were under water.

It was estimated that the New York Hudson valley saw approximately 10 inches of rain in a single day, which is the same amount that is typically seen over the course of three months, to devastating impact. Vermont saw rainfall ranging from five to nine inches in a single day.

Some water had to be released from the City of Montpelier’s Wrightsville Dam as it was nearing capacity Tuesday. While the rain has stopped, the water levels are taking a long time to recede and in some areas are still rising, as water travels downhill into valleys.

The rain caused the collapse of a bridge on Route 218 in New York. Thirteen other roads in New York were closed due to flooding, and the Amtrak has suspended services in the Hudson Valley region. The Vermont State Police reported that three dozen state roads were closed due to flooding.

President Biden has declared a federal state of

emergency in the state of Vermont, while New York State governor Kathy Hochul has requested federal emergency assistance and declared a state of emergency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has made available equipment and resources to Vermont’s emergency services.

As of Tuesday, emergency responders had made over 100 emergency rescues in Vermont.

The New York flash floods have killed one woman, while there are so far no reported deaths out of Vermont. Pamela Nugent was trying to escape rising water levels in her home when she was carried away by a violent current.

The extent of the flooding in New York and Vermont extends beyond that of 2011’s tropical storm Irene, and rivals the 1927 Great Vermont Flood, which was caused by comparable levels of rain over the course of a couple weeks, resulting in the rivers swelling.

Despite the increased frequency of extreme weather events worldwide, the ruling class has made no effort to prepare for extreme weather events, let alone work to prevent such disasters.

The New England flooding follows the July 2021 flood disaster in western Germany, the catastrophe of the Pakistan flood of 2022, which killed nearly 2,000 and left over 2 million homeless, and the deadly Italian floods earlier this year. Worldwide, mass rainfall and flooding events are increasing both in frequency and intensity. According to a study by World Weather Attribution, the intensity of the rainfall experienced in Pakistan was exacerbated 70 percent by increased temperatures.

The World Meteorological Organization declared that world is seeing an “El Niño” ocean heating pattern, which periodically causes shifts in ocean currents leading to extreme droughts in some parts of the world and torrential downpours in other parts of the world. This also causes

larger, dangerous typhoons to form the Pacific Ocean.

Climate scientists predict that El Niño heating patterns will become more intense and occur more frequently with the continued rise in global temperatures due to the greenhouse effect caused by carbon emissions.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that for every degree Celsius that the Earth warms, there will be a 7 percent increase in heavy rain events. Temperature increases cause an acceleration of the water cycle process of evaporation and precipitation, which according to Mathew Barlow, one of the authors of the IPCC report, increases the frequency of intense precipitation.

The IPCC report reiterates that “risks are increasing with every increment of warming,” and that “adverse effects from human-caused climate change will continue to intensify.” The report makes clear that “limiting warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius involves rapid, deep, and in most cases immediate greenhouse gas emissions reductions.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* recently noted “The reports from both climate monitors reaffirm what has been known for decades, that the anarchic nature of capitalist production releases billions of tons of greenhouse gases into Earth’s atmosphere each year, trapping more and more heat and causing increasingly horrific ecological disasters.”

Extreme weather knows no borders, and therefore climate change can not be fought on the basis of a national or local strategy. The fight against climate change requires an international and scientific strategy, a struggle which is not possible within the framework of the capitalist system. Workers around the world share common interests and are the only objective social force that can unite against climate change.



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