

Flooding in Central Texas leaves at least 13 dead and 20 children missing

Kevin Reed
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A catastrophic flood has engulfed Central Texas, leaving at least 13 people confirmed dead and more than 20 children still missing as of Friday. The disaster, which has centered on the Guadalupe River in Kerr County, has devastated communities, destroyed infrastructure and triggered an unprecedented search and rescue operation.

Among the most horrific aspects of this tragedy is the ongoing search for dozens of missing girls at Camp Mystic, an all-girls summer camp, where families are desperately awaiting news of their loved ones.

The origins of this disaster can be traced to the remnants of Tropical Storm Barry, which developed in the Gulf of Mexico before moving inland and unleashing extraordinary amounts of rain across Central Texas. Meteorologists have reported that some areas received up to 15 inches of rain in just a few hours, with the National Weather Service (NWS) documenting a staggering rise in the Guadalupe River of 26 feet in just 45 minutes.

This surge was described as catastrophic and life-threatening, overwhelming the region's already stressed infrastructure. The hardest-hit areas include the communities of Hunt, Ingram, and Kerrville in Kerr County along with the Guadalupe River Valley, San Angelo, and nearby Bandera and Kendall Counties.

The NWS issued multiple flash flood emergencies, warning of a large and deadly flood wave moving down the Guadalupe River. The river ultimately reached its second-highest recorded level, peaking at nearly 30 feet, far above its major flood stage of 22 feet. The region's soil, previously parched from drought, was unable to absorb the deluge, resulting in deadly runoff that swept through neighborhoods, camps, and towns.

The emergency response to the disaster has been massive and fraught with challenges. Over 500 rescue personnel, including state and federal agencies, have been deployed to the affected areas. The operation involves 14 helicopters, 12 drones, hundreds of ground teams and specialized water rescue units.

Dozens of people have already been saved from trees, rooftops and vehicles that were swept away by the floodwaters. Emergency calls continue to pour in as stranded residents await rescue, and the number of missing remains uncertain. Officials have stressed that some individuals may be unreachable due to widespread power and communication outages, but the scale of

the devastation means that the death toll is expected to rise in the coming days.

Scenes of devastation are everywhere. Roads, bridges and highways have been washed away, leaving entire communities isolated. RV parks and neighborhoods along the river have been obliterated, with homes and vehicles carried downstream by the raging waters. Thousands of people remain without electricity, and many communities are cut off from emergency services.

Families have turned to social media, posting photos and pleas for information about missing loved ones. Temporary shelters and reunification centers have been established in Kerrville and surrounding towns, but the sense of uncertainty and fear among the public is palpable.

Weather and climate experts have been quick to comment on the unprecedented nature of the flooding. Meteorologist Bob Fogarty of the NWS Austin/San Antonio office remarked:

The water's moving so fast, you're not going to recognize how bad it is until it's on top of you. The gauge failed after recording a level of 29.5 feet. We think the river's higher than that—the gauge is completely underwater.

Jeff Lindner of the Harris County Flood Control District issued a stark warning:

Move to high ground immediately! This is a significant threat to life.

Officials and experts have compared the current flooding to the infamous 1987 flood in the region but note that the speed and volume of this event far surpass the flow in that disaster. Climate scientists have long warned that the region's increasing precipitation variability—long dry spells followed by intense rainfall—would lead to more frequent and severe flooding.

Andrew Dessler, a climate scientist at Texas A&M, stated:

The data indicate that precipitation variability is on the rise, which scientists have anticipated for decades—meaning prolonged dry spells followed by intense rainfall that leads to flooding.

These warnings have gone largely unheeded, as the lack of adequate warning systems and preparedness has once again left working class people to bear the brunt of nature's fury.

Kerr County Judge Rob Kelly admitted:

We do not have a warning system... We didn't know this flood was coming. Rest assured, no one knew this kind of flood was coming.

Some reporters and family members have questioned why summer camps and riverside communities were not evacuated despite advance warnings from state emergency management officials. The absence of effective early warning and evacuation protocols has undoubtedly contributed to the scale of the tragedy.

One of the most distressing aspects of the disaster has been the situation at Camp Mystic, an all-girls Christian summer camp in Hunt, Texas. The camp was hosting around 750 children when the floodwaters struck. As of Friday evening, 23 girls remain unaccounted for. While some may be unreachable due to communication outages, officials have not ruled out the worst. The camp lost power, water and internet, and the highway leading to the camp was washed away, hampering rescue efforts.

Camp officials pleaded for help, stating:

The highway has washed away so we are struggling to get more help. Please continue to pray and send any help if you have contacts to do so.

Search and rescue teams are combing the camp and surrounding riverbanks, using helicopters and boats to search for missing children. Some girls have been rescued from trees and isolated areas within the camp, but the fate of many remains unknown.

Camp officials have sent emails to parents, stating that if they had not been personally contacted, their daughters were accounted for. Families of missing girls have turned to social media, sharing photos and heartfelt messages in hopes of gathering any information.

The anxiety and anguish among parents are indescribable. One family member wrote via social media, "We are desperate for any news. Please, if anyone has seen our daughter or her friends, let us know. We just want them home safe."

The broader impact of the flooding includes entire neighborhoods and RV parks along the Guadalupe River that have been swept away. In Ingram, an RV park was destroyed, with families still inside their campers at the time of the flood.

Mandatory evacuations were ordered for areas near the river, and residents were urged to seek higher ground immediately. Disaster declarations have been issued in Kerrville and other cities, activating emergency management plans and opening shelters for displaced residents. The destruction of infrastructure has left many communities isolated, with no access to emergency services or outside assistance.

The response from national and state authorities has been for many, too late. President Donald Trump and Texas Governor Greg Abbott have issued statements and provided services that are both thoroughly inadequate for the scale and scope of the devastation which has completely overwhelmed local resources and exposed the woeful inadequacy of existing emergency preparedness measures.

As the floodwaters begin to recede, the full extent of the devastation is becoming clear. Experts have long warned that such disasters would become more frequent and severe, yet the lack of focus on such an inevitability by government officials has once again exposed the way the public is being left helpless in the face of nature's fury.

The loss of life and anguish experienced by so many families in Texas because of this disaster were not inevitable. Climate scientists and disaster preparedness experts have repeatedly called for investment in climate resilience, emergency infrastructure and public safety measures to mitigate the impact of such events.

These warnings have not been heeded because the ruling class has priorities that do not include the prevention of deaths from natural disasters. The preoccupation of the financial oligarchy, which controls both the Democrats and Republicans, is to increase its wealth and maintain the outmoded and bankrupt capitalist profit system.

It is a central task of the working class to unite with climate scientists and meteorologists, who have warned about the inevitability and horrific consequences of such storms and flooding, and mobilize its enormous power to take measures that will prevent deadly disasters in the future as a component part of the revolutionary struggle for socialism.



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