# Trump visits Texas flood disaster: The perpetrator-in-chief at the scene of the crime

**Barry Grey**
**11 July 2025**

On Friday, President Donald Trump visited the Central Texas region devastated by the flash flood that ripped through Kerr County on July 4. As Trump—accompanied by First Lady Melania, Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, Governor Greg Abbott, Texas senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, and others—met with first responders and victims of the flood, the official death count was at least 129.

The number of missing stands at 160-173. Those killed by the massive flash flood include at least 27 girls and counselors from a summer camp on the banks of the Guadalupe River.

In his first major public response to the disaster—a press conference held a full week after the flood—Trump refused to answer questions about the role of his administration and that of MAGA ally Abbott in the catastrophe. Amid fawning praise from the assembled officials and right-wing media, Trump and company made clear that a massive cover-up is underway and no one will be held accountable for the preventable loss of life.

After remarks from Trump, Melania, and Abbott—filled with invocations of God and self-congratulation—a reporter asked Trump to address questions from victims and survivors about the lack of adequate warning as the river rose through the night and the absence of a flood warning system.

Trump replied: "Everyone did an incredible job under the circumstances. Only a very evil person would ask a question like that."

Texas Congressman Chip Roy cited an earlier statement by Abbott, who had said, "Pointing fingers is for losers."

The degraded spectacle arguably reached its low point when Trump called on the TV evangelist and huckster Dr. Phil to add to the outpouring of praise for Trump, God and "Texas strong."

At the same time, Abbott and other state officials, contradicting their claim that nothing could have been done to avert the massive loss of life, pledged to investigate the disaster and implement measures to prevent its repetition, a promise that will not be kept.

The mass fatalities occurred because federal, state and local authorities refused to authorize adequate disaster warning and response infrastructure for a region in the Texas hill country known as "flash flood alley." Kerrville, the center of the flood, lacked even a siren to warn of fast-rising waters from the Guadalupe River.

This disaster-in-waiting was compounded by the savage cuts carried out by the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Service (NWS).

At the time of the flood, Paul Yura, the longtime National Weather Service meteorologist in charge of "warning coordination" at the San Antonio office, 65 miles southeast of Kerr County, had taken an early retirement amid DOGE cuts and had not been replaced. As of July 4, the San Antonio office had six vacancies out of 26 positions, and the San Angelo office had four unfilled positions out of 23.

The National Weather Service lost nearly 600 employees in the months leading up to the disaster through a mix of firings, early retirements and voluntary buyouts, from a 4,200-person workforce.

Trump has forced out 20 percent of career employees at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and announced plans to disband the agency. Under his administration, all FEMA expenditures above $100,000 must now be personally approved by

DHS Secretary Noem. It reportedly took Noem 72 hours to authorize a FEMA relief effort.

Since January, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has lost 1,875 to 2,000 employees through firings, buyouts, and retirements. The Trump administration's fiscal 2026 budget proposal seeks to cut NOAA's overall budget by 28 percent, with especially steep reductions (up to 75 percent) targeting NOAA's research arms, including the elimination of climate and weather research programs. The proposal aims to reduce NOAA's full-time staff by 17 percent.

This is part of Trump's drive to shut down all federal programs addressing climate change and effectively ban research into global warming, a major cause of heightened severity of weather-related disturbances.

The first Trump administration rejected Kerr County's application for a federal grant to build a flood warning system. The county applied to the state government for funding to strengthen its flood warning system three times between 2016 and 2018, aiming to install a system with sensors and mass notification capabilities, and was denied each time. Just a few months ago, the state Senate blocked legislation to establish a statewide emergency response plan, at a cost of $500 million.

Meanwhile, Governor Abbott has spent $11 billion since 2021 on border security through Operation Lone Star, deploying 3,700 Texas National Guard to the border along with over 2,000 state police, and constructing 85 miles of border wall. A survey conducted by the state government last year identified more than $50 billion in flood control needs, but the state government provided only $1.4 billion, less than 3 percent of what is required. Infrastructure spending represents less than 0.5 percent of the $322 billion state budget.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote on July 9:

Texas embodies the degradation of American capitalism, where staggering inequality is combined with political reaction and brutality. Despite—or rather because of—the immense wealth accumulated by billionaires in oil, gas, tech, weapons, ranching and healthcare, the social conditions facing the majority of Texans are among the worst in the country…

Texas has 84 billionaires, with a combined net worth of $722 billion, but no personal income tax, no corporate income tax, no estate tax and no inheritance tax. This has made it a haven for enormous private wealth, side by side with dire poverty and abysmal living conditions.

These conditions, in Texas and across the country, will be sharply intensified by the passage last week of Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill," which passed with only token opposition from the Democratic Party. The act, signed into law by Trump on July 4, the same days as the Texas flood, will cut spending for Medicaid, food stamps and other vital social programs by over $1 trillion to partially offset a $3.3 trillion tax cut for the rich and $170 billion for even more brutal attacks on immigrants, including a vast expansion of the network of concentration camps for immigrants and political opponents of the Trump dictatorship-in-the-making.

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