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**Environment**

# **Flooding in Rennes, the weather to blame?**

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**For several days, Rennes and the surrounding region have been experiencing an unprecedented episode of intense rainfall, resulting in river flooding the likes of which has not been seen for decades.**

Several streets near the Ille-et-Rance canal have been seriously affected, and hundreds of residents have been evacuated to Red Cross shelters. Guipry-Messac is also under water, with record flooding, and Redon is set to receive the flood wave from the whole catchment area by the weekend. The NPA Rennes naturally expresses its complete solidarity with those affected and salutes the commitment of the SDIS 35 and all the personnel mobilised to respond to this... 'natural' disaster? Well, not quite.

## Rapid urbanisation in flood-prone areas

For some years now, Rennes has been experiencing galloping urbanisation. You wouldn't have to be a rocket scientist to guess that some plots of land would be easily submerged by the first heavy rains. On the outskirts of the Saint-Martin meadows, in the Confluence district... new buildings are springing up and the cranes are still working.

With 10,000 more inhabitants since 2015, due to an increase in the natural balance but above all to a massive influx of new residents linked closely to the high-speed train line, the municipality is building like crazy. The current Local Housing Plan calls for an additional 30,000 homes to be built between 2023 and 2028, more than half of which will be in the heart of the city. Between 2011 and 2017, 188 hectares of land were artificially developed.

With the city's topography leaving little choice, construction is taking place in flood-prone areas close to the Vilaine and canals. These land requirements are a boon to the region's property developers (Giboire) and concrete companies (Lafarge).

## Destruction of hedgerows

This land artificialisation and concrete development is widely supported by the municipality and by Rennes Métropole through its projects at La Prévalaye, Via Silva and the extension and even construction of a new football stadium. With the destruction of this arable land, these hedgerows, these small hectares of hedged farmland on the edge of the metropolis, an entire ecosystem that retains rainwater is destroyed every year by the municipal team and the developers.

## The poorest pay the price

Unprecedented climatic episodes of this kind will multiply over the next few years in the face of political inaction and the headlong rush of capitalism and the governments that serve it. In 2020, the European Environment Agency already announced: 'In this most optimistic scenario, on the west coast of France, the risk of flooding will be almost 200 times greater than in 2010'. And in Rennes, as everywhere else in the world, the bill is being paid by the most

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vulnerable sections of the population, while property developers, concrete companies and insurance companies are profiting from these crises.

The floods in Rennes are not the result of 'bad luck'; they are the result of capitalist spatial planning. Development must be based on the environment, not on profits. To reduce flooding, it is also essential to limit global warming as much as possible through an eco-socialist reduction in production. Is the whole of Rennes sinking? It's up to us to flood the capitalist system!

*PS:*

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