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China

China Hit by “Deadly Weather Events”

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During the first ten days of July, cyclones (typhoons), tornadoes, storms, severe weather, floods, and landslides wreaked havoc in the central and southern parts of the country—and beyond. China is facing extreme weather events intensified by the climate crisis.

Natural disasters are common in China, particularly in the summer, when some regions experience heavy rainfall while others are plagued by extreme heat. However, the frequency and scale of these events are increasing as global warming accelerates—driven, in particular, by the use of fossil fuels. Among the affected regions are Guangxi, Guizhou, and Hunan in the south and center of the country, home to a population of over 150 million—more than in Russia.

In fact, a significant portion of the country is affected by this series of weather events. Maysak, the first typhoon of the season, made landfall on July 6 in the southern island province of Hainan, having originated in Vietnam. In Nanning, the capital of the Guangxi region, and its surrounding areas, floodwaters breached the dams of three reservoirs, according to local authorities. The city of Nanning and its surrounding areas were flooded, forcing many residents to take refuge on rooftops, with some 55,000 people evacuated. On the same day, a tornado struck the city of Ezhou in Hubei Province (central-east). In fact, two destructive tornadoes swept through central China that evening, when warm air from the south, driven by Typhoon Maysak, collided with cold air from the north.

On July 9, a landslide in Gansu (northwest) occurred following violent thunderstorms and torrential rains, leaving 39 dead, 9 missing, and hundreds injured, according to press reports. It was caused by “a severe episode of atmospheric convection” (i.e., a temperature contrast) that triggered “thunderstorms and strong winds” which swept through cities such as Huangshi and Huanggang, according to state media.

In the city of Guigang, a metropolitan area in the Guangxi Autonomous Region (in the south), floodwaters turned a major road into a lake, submerging cars and rushing down a hillside as muddy torrents before pouring onto a construction site.

On July 11, Typhoon Bavi, originating in the Philippines and Taiwan, struck the coast further east, prompting the evacuation of nearly 2 million people. Shortly before that, torrential rains in the capital Beijing (in the northeast) led authorities to evacuate more than 100,000 people.

A typhoon was also expected over the weekend on the east coast, south of Shanghai, bringing with it violent gusts of wind.

In southern and central China, violent thunderstorms and torrential rains have left about 17 people dead and hundreds injured. The central province of Hubei was also affected. Tens of thousands of people were evacuated in the southern region of Guangxi, where some 40 rivers and streams burst their banks and torrents of water poured out after the dam walls of a reservoir broke, according to state television CCTV.

In an exotic twist, some 800 to 900 snakes (including cobras) escaped after a snake farm was destroyed by the floodwaters in the city of Hangzhou.

According to government authorities, torrential rains were expected in mid-July to reach certain coastal and eastern areas of Guangxi, as well as the southwest of the neighboring province of Guangdong—home to a major

manufacturing hub—putting the integrity of reservoirs and dikes to the test and potentially triggering further population evacuations.

The Chinese press reports on effective prevention and relief efforts. The alerts certainly enabled preventive evacuations in some areas, but not in all, as evidenced by these accounts gathered by an Agence France-Presse correspondent who was able to visit the town of Liulan (Guangxi), where floods destroyed homes, swept away livestock, and caused the collapse of a major dam (and another, smaller one near the town of Gantang). The dam's walls collapsed, unleashing torrents of muddy water downstream, with a preliminary death toll of 26 and seven people missing.

Many of the affected residents in this town had not fully grasped the gravity of the situation. According to Mr. Huang, “it has never been this bad before.” “We didn't receive any warning. If we had, we wouldn't have suffered so many losses.” Even belongings on the upper floor of his house were destroyed by the floodwaters. “In several hundred years, this is the first time the floodwaters have reached the first floor,” Bi Yunchun, another resident of Gantang, told AFP.

China's compensation system for flood victims was expanded in 2025 to include storage areas where authorities deliberately divert floodwaters to reduce flooding downstream. The scope of compensation for people living or working in these storage areas has been expanded. Previously limited to draft animals, it now includes livestock and poultry that could not be evacuated, with the central government covering 70% of the costs and local governments covering 30%. Compensation remains conditional and does not cover all risks.

Furthermore, there can be a wide gap between the law and reality. The selection of storage zones obviously involves a political dimension (affluent residential neighborhoods or business districts related to those in power will be spared). Corruption is endemic at all levels of the administration, and repression is commonplace. In the absence of more or less independent social organizations, it is very difficult to ensure the collective defense of the rights of working-class, peasant and popular communities over the long term. Under these conditions, with every extreme weather event, new segments of the population are plunged into poverty—a situation from which they will find it all the more difficult to escape as climate disasters follow one after another.

More generally, climate-related disasters threaten to wipe out the equivalent of tens of billions of dollars in commercial activity each year due to urban flooding, halted industrial activity, submerged crops, and livestock swept away by the floodwaters—all while the Chinese economy is already sluggish.

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