

China drought leaves millions short of water

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A man checks an almost dried-out reservoir in Kunming, southwest China. Millions of people face drinking water shortages in the region because of a once-a-century drought that has dried up rivers and threatens vast farmlands, state media reported Wednesday.

Millions of people face drinking water shortages in southwestern China because of a once-a-century drought that has dried up rivers and threatens vast farmlands, state media reported Wednesday.

The drought has gripped huge areas of Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan provinces, the Guangxi region, and the mega-city of Chongqing for months, with rainfall 60 percent below normal since September, the Global Times said.

Guizhou province has been particularly hard-hit, with 86 out of its 88 cities within the drought zone and more than 17 million people short of drinking water, the report said.

Millions of people also were said to be short of water in other provinces, according to various reports.

The Global Times said some rivers had dried up in parts of Guizhou and that local villagers in some areas were lining up to obtain emergency water supplies distributed by the government.

China is prone to [extreme weather](#), and severe droughts are a regular occurrence throughout the country. However, the current water shortages reported in the southwest have been particularly acute.

Meteorological officials in Yunnan have said the [drought](#) was the worst in 100 years in some areas, the Global Times said.

The government announced last week that it had initiated hundreds of cloud-seeding operations in the region in recent months, using rockets fired into the sky or chemicals dropped from aircraft in a bid to induce rainfall.

However, Xinhua news agency last week quoted officials saying the efforts had so far been largely unsuccessful due to a lack of moisture in the skies.

Media reports also have said millions of livestock and huge farming areas were short of water.

Meteorologists have predicted the situation could worsen in coming months as hot and dry weather was expected to continue and water demand rises as farmers turn soon to their spring planting.

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