

# Seine reaches peak in flood-hit Paris

January 29 2018, by Clare Byrne

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Flooding in Paris has caused around 1,500 people to evacuate their homes, while a similar number of homes remain without electricity

The swollen Seine peaked Monday at more than four metres above its normal level, leaving a lengthy mop-up job for Parisians after days of rising waters that have put the soggy city on alert.

The river rose to 5.84 metres (19.2 feet) early Monday, causing continued headaches for commuters as well as people living near its overflowing banks.

The Vigicrues flooding watchdog said the river would stay at its current level throughout the day before beginning to recede Tuesday.

Around 1,500 people have been evacuated from their homes in the greater Paris region, according to police, while a similar number of homes remain without electricity.

Tourists also suffered with the capital's famous Bateaux Mouches rivercraft out of service, and only emergency services authorised to navigate the waterway.

The Seine did not quite reach the 2016 high of 6.1 metres, when priceless artworks had to be evacuated from the Louvre.

But the world's most visited museum was still on alert Sunday, along with the Musee d'Orsay and Orangerie galleries, with the lower level of the Louvre's Islamic arts wing closed to visitors at least until Monday.

A statue of an Algerian French army soldier from the Crimean War named Zouave that has guarded the river at the Pont d'Alma bridge in central Paris since 1910 was drenched up to the thighs in the muddy waters.



A cafe in Paris partly submerged in the rising waters of the River Seine

"Fluctuat nec mergitur (tossed but not sunk) but it's cooold," the Zouave statue tweeted from an account set up in its name by an anonymous admirer, using the Latin motto of the City of Paris.

Police again warned flooding aficionados against bathing or canoeing in the river, saying it was "forbidden and extremely dangerous".

## **Flooding to recede 'slowly'**

More favourable weather is expected for the week ahead, but even once the water levels start to recede forecasters and officials say it will be a

slow process, as much of the ground in northern France is already waterlogged.

"If we're talking about things getting completely back to normal, that's going to take weeks," said Jerome Goellner, regional head of environmental services.

The December-January period is now the third wettest on record since data collection began in 1900, according to France's meteorological service.

A main commuter line, the RER C, has halted service at Paris stops until at least February 5, and some expressways that run alongside the Seine have been closed.



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However, fears of flooding like that seen in 1910, which saw the Seine rise to 8.62 metres and shut down much of Paris's basic infrastructure, appeared unfounded.

In the city centre, the Seine flows through a deep channel, limiting the potential flooding damage.

But several areas on the city's outskirts were under water, including the southern suburb of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, where some residents were getting around by boat and dozens have been evacuated from their homes.

Downstream from Paris, [water levels](#) in some areas surpassed those of 2016.

"Everyone is getting around by boat" on the island of Migneaux in Poissy, a western Paris suburb, said local Serge Matikhin.

"The mood is still good, we are used to it—in 20 years we are on our eighth or ninth flood," he said.

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