

Death toll in Europe from storm hits nine (Update)

December 21 2019



Across southwestern France, violent winds left 110,000 households without electricity

The death toll from storms that have battered Spain, Portugal and France rose to nine on Sunday as the region braced for more violent winds and

heavy rain.

Storms Elsa and Fabien have flooded rivers, brought down power lines, uprooted trees and disrupted rail and air travel across the region, leaving more than 118,000 households without electricity.

Two people have so far died in Portugal and seven have now been killed in Spain, the worst affected country, after a fisherman was swept off rocks into the sea in Catalonia.

The local government said three police officers and another fisherman had to be rescued after they tried to save the man in the resort town of Sant Feliu de Guíxols, 100 kilometres (70 miles) northeast of Barcelona.

The deaths in Spain include a South Korean woman killed by debris falling from a building in Madrid and a Dutch man who drowned windsurfing in rough weather off the Andalusian coast.

As a weakened Storm Elsa moved over Britain on Saturday, Storm Fabien quickly moved in, bringing winds of 170 kilometres per hour to Galicia in northwestern Spain, forcing the cancellation of 14 flights according to Spanish airport operator Aena.

Some 8,000 households in Galicia were without power due to damage caused to power lines by the wind, local officials said.

Eight Madrid city parks remained shut on Saturday because of the strong winds.

However, Spanish officials said on Sunday that Fabien was moving away quickly.



Storm Elsa flooded rivers, brought down power lines and disrupted rail and air travel across Spain, Portugal and France

Parks and cemeteries were also closed in Bordeaux in southwestern France on Saturday while the Arlette Gruss circus, which had set up in a big tent in the city's main square, cancelled three performances.

France's weather office placed 15 regions in the southwest of the country on orange alert Saturday, as the storm battered its Atlantic coast.

The winds were as fast as 148 kph at Socoa, in the southwest near the border with Spain. Even on the northwest coast of Brittany, winds reached up to 120 kph.

The region was still being buffeted by gusts of up to 90 kilometres an hour on Sunday.

Across southwestern France, violent winds left 110,000 households without electricity, officials said on Sunday.

France's SNCF rail network cancelled services between Bordeaux, Toulouse and Hendaye in the southwest because of the likelihood of winds blowing trees down on to the line.

Officials on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica closed all the island's airports because of the approaching storm. Ferry services to the mainland have also been suspended.

Roads into Corsica's city of Ajaccio were also closed to try to prevent people from getting caught in floods.

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