

Back-to-back tornadoes kill 12 in China; over 300 injured

May 15 2021



In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, emergency personnel search through the wreckage of buildings destroyed by a reported tornado in Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province, early Saturday, May 15, 2021. Two tornadoes killed several people in central and eastern China and left hundreds of others injured, officials and state media reported Saturday. (Xiong Qi/Xinhua via AP)

Back-to-back tornadoes killed 12 people in central and eastern China and left more than 300 others injured, authorities said Saturday.

Eight people died in the inland city of Wuhan on Friday night and four others in the town of Shengze, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) east in Jiangsu province, local governments said.

The first tornado struck Shengze about 7 p.m., damaging homes and factories and knocking out power, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The Suzhou city government, which oversees the town, said in a social media post that four people had died and 149 others had minor injuries. Shengze is near Shanghai on China's east coast.

Another tornado hit Wuhan at about 8:40 p.m. with winds of 86 kilometers (53 miles) per hour, destroying more than two dozen homes and triggering a power outage affecting 26,600 households, Xinhua said. Officials in Wuhan said at a news conference Saturday that eight had died and 230 were injured.

They said that 28 homes collapsed in Wuhan, another 130 were damaged and put economic losses at 37 million yuan (\$5.7 million), the Hubei Daily newspaper said. Construction site sheds and two cranes were also damaged, while downed power lines knocked out electricity, Xinhua said.



Workers clear debris at a factory that was damaged by a reported tornado in Shengze township in Suzhou in eastern China's Jiangsu Province, Saturday, May 15, 2021. Two tornadoes killed several people in central and eastern China and left hundreds of others injured, officials and state media reported Saturday. (Chinatopix via AP)



Damage to buildings from a reported tornado is seen in an aerial view in Shengze township in Suzhou in eastern China's Jiangsu Province, Saturday, May 15, 2021. Two tornadoes killed several people in central and eastern China and left hundreds of others injured, officials and state media reported Saturday. (Chinatopix via AP)

Photos showed a swarm of rescuers searching through building debris in Wuhan after midnight Friday and workers clearing metallic debris at a factory in Shengze in the morning.

Wuhan is the city where COVID-19 was first detected in late 2019.

Tornadoes are rare in China. In July 2019, a tornado killed six people in the northeastern Liaoning province, and another tornado the following

month killed eight on the southern resort island of Hainan.

In 2016, a tornado and accompanying hailstorm killed 98 people in the eastern Jiangsu province.

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