

Death toll from Venezuela floods rises to eight

September 26 2022



Members of a Methodist church in Tachira state were swept away by sudden floods.

The death toll from floods that swept away a group of people at a religious retreat in western Venezuela has risen to eight, authorities said

on Sunday, as the search for two more missing people continued.

Around 40 members of a Methodist church had gathered in Tachira state on Friday when heavy rains caused flooding, state governor Freddy Bernal tweeted.

Some of the worshippers were bathing in the river when the rains came down, suddenly raising the water level and washing them away, Bernal said.

Four of the dead were between the ages of 12 and 17, according to a police report seen by AFP, with the rest aged between 19 to 25.

"The search for two more people is ongoing," Bernal wrote.

The flooding took place in a region of the Andes Mountains bordering Colombia that is popular with tourists.

Authorities were searching 12 kilometers (seven miles) downstream from where they estimated the 10 people had been swept away by the current, according to police chief Yesnardo Canal.

The incident took place in the city of Lobatera, about 31 kilometers (19 miles) from Tachira's capital of San Cristobal, authorities said.

Resident Martin Carrillo said his daughter and his son-in-law were swept away by the current.

"They were on a spiritual retreat, they decided to go swimming in the river and the flood came and swept them away," he told AFP as he waited with several family members for the bodies to be delivered.



The incident took place in the city of Lobatera, about 31 kilometers (19 miles) from Tachira's capital of San Cristobal.

This year, Venezuela has recorded above-average rainfall, which has caused damage in several regions, officials said.

Government spokespeople have linked the heavy [rain](#) to the La Nina

weather phenomenon, which is caused by a thermal anomaly in the equatorial surface waters of the Pacific Ocean.

In Caracas, the country's capital, rains accompanied by strong gusts of wind, electrical discharges and hail were recorded on Sunday.

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