

Cyclone leaves 13 dead in Brazil

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Floods triggered by the cyclone have forced thousands from their homes in southern Brazil.

A cyclone which tore through southern Brazil has killed at least 13 people and forced thousands from their homes, authorities said Sunday.

Torrential rain and strong winds on Thursday and Friday caused damage in dozens of towns in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, including its capital Porto Alegre—the latest in a string of weather-related disasters to hit South America's biggest country.

Two more bodies were discovered in the coastal town of Caraa, one of the hardest hit, bringing the [death toll](#) from the storm to 13, the state civil defense agency said.

Three remained missing in Caraa on Sunday, after the number was revised down from Saturday's total of 20.

The town of Tramandai was also hit hard, with recorded windspeeds up to 101.9 kilometers (60 miles) per hour, according to official figures.

A four-month-old baby is among the fatalities, according to local media, which broadcast footage of a car being swept into a cemetery by powerful winds.

"The water came up to our waist inside the house. Thank God, the firemen arrived quickly and got us out on boats. It seemed like a nightmare," a woman in the town of Sao Leopoldo told the newspaper *Estadao*, which did not give her name.

Other people were evacuated by helicopter.

Nearly 5,000 people were left with damaged houses and on Sunday around 84,000 people were without power. Authorities had preemptively evacuated some 80 people from high-risk areas.

Rio Grande do Sul Governor Eduardo Leite visited the worst-affected areas by helicopter on Saturday together with government and rescue officials.

In Caraa, the governor visited a [community center](#) used to shelter hundreds of people whose homes were damaged by the storm.

"The situation in Caraa worries us deeply. It is essential that we can, in an integrated manner, quickly map the main affected areas and identify the people who need support," the governor said in a statement.

Leite said state firefighters had rescued about 2,400 people in the past two days.

"Our main objective at this moment is to protect and save human lives. Rescue people who are isolated, locate the missing and support families," Leite said.

In Sao Leopoldo, half an hour from Porto Alegre, 246 mm (9.7 inches) of rain fell in 18 hours, "a level never seen before in the history" of the city of 240,000 inhabitants, stressed Porto Alegre mayor Ary Jose Vanazzi.

On Sunday, streets in the towns of Novo Hamburgo, Lindolfo Collor and Sao Leopoldo were still flooded.

As the rain stopped, soldiers were able to carry out rescue operations in Novo Hamburgo.

Further rainfall and [cold temperatures](#) are expected in the middle of next week, however, potentially further exacerbating the situation for those already impacted. Brazil has been hit by a series of deadly weather disasters in recent years, which experts say are being made worse by climate change.

At least 65 people died in February when torrential rain triggered floods and landslides in the southeastern state of Sao Paulo.

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