

Toll from Bulgaria flooding rises to four

September 6 2023



Heavy rain caused damage on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast.

The toll from torrential rains and flooding on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast has climbed to four, while several thousand tourists have been left stranded, officials said Wednesday.

Heavy rain and thunderstorms since late Monday caused rivers to

overflow, damaging bridges and cutting off access in the region south of the coastal city of Burgas.

Rescuers found the bodies of two women—a 54-year-old regional court chairwoman and her 30-year-old daughter—on Wednesday, the interior ministry said.

The two women were missing after the car they were traveling in was swept away while crossing a flooded bridge.

Earlier in the day, the body of a man was recovered from the sea, while another man, a 61-year-old construction worker, was found dead on Tuesday.

The rains were the heaviest since 1994 with as much rain falling in 24 hours as usually in several months, according to head of the fire department Alexandar Dzhartov.

"Around 4,000 people are affected by the disaster along the entire southern part of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast," said Tourism Minister Zaritsa Dinkova after meeting hoteliers near the flood-hit coastal town of Tsarevo.

"There is a problem transporting tourists because it is dangerous to go by coach on the roads affected by the floods," she added.

In Tsarevo—which declared a state of emergency—residents and volunteers were picking up debris, with overturned cars and caravans strewn around streets and camping places, according to an AFP photographer.

"It's a disaster... the steep terrain (along the coast) creates an enormous danger," Prime Minister Nikolay Denkov said, adding "long-term

solutions" would be needed to secure the area.

Flooding—rare in the Black Sea coast area—is becoming increasingly common in Bulgaria with the impact of climate change and the poor maintenance of infrastructure.

Environment Minister Julian Popov on Nova television warned of the danger posed by "the poor state of infrastructure and too much construction on the coast".

Scientists warn that extreme weather is becoming more intense as a result of climate change.

Several people were also killed when heavy rains hit Spain, Greece and Turkey this week.

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