

# Five dead, three missing after French weekend storms

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Bridges were flooded during the weekend storms.

Five people died over the weekend when violent storms swept southern France, authorities said Monday, as rescue services continued their search for three missing people, including two children.

On Sunday, a man was found dead in the village of Gagnieres in the Gard department in his car that had been swept away by floods, authorities said.

Also on Sunday, two women died in a separate incident when their car got caught in the raging current of a river.

Another victim of the storm was an 87-year-old man who drowned in the Herault river. His body was found Monday stuck between tree branches around 20 meters (65 feet) from his car.

Another man whose body was found Monday is believed to be the father of a family of four who tried to cross a flooded bridge over the river Gardon by car in Dions, near the southwestern city of Nimes.

His wife was rescued and taken to hospital, but their two children, aged four and 13, are still missing.

Regional authorities said the car's driver appeared to have ignored a warning sign set up at a bridge and tried to cross before police had been able to set up barriers to block access.

"There were probably cases of individual behavior that was not totally appropriate," the secretary-general of the Gard department, Frederic Loiseau, told reporters.



Helicopters were deployed for the search.

Around 110 firefighters and 120 gendarmes have been involved in the search, backed up by helicopters, drones, search dogs and divers.

In the neighboring Ardeche department, the manager of a hydroelectric power station who went to check on the facility has also been missing since Saturday evening in the village of Saint Martin de Valamas.

In another Ardeche village, two houses collapsed in a landslide. Nobody was hurt.

Seven departments were placed on an orange weather alert on Saturday,

but were out of danger for the most part on Monday.

Southern France regularly falls victim to sudden storms. In the worst recent incident 22 people died in gale-force winds and flooding in 2022.

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