

Southern China storms kill four, force mass evacuations

April 22 2024



Heavy rains have hit southern China, prompting tens of thousands to be evacuated, including in Qingyuan (pictured).

Four people are dead and 10 others missing following storms that battered southern China, state media said Monday, with tens of

thousands evacuated from areas hit by torrential downpours.

Heavy rain has descended upon the vast southern province of Guangdong in recent days, swelling rivers and raising fears of severe flooding that state media said could be of the sort only "seen around once a century".

"Three deaths were reported in Zhaoqing City while the remaining one is a rescuer in Shaoguan City," state news agency Xinhua reported, citing local authorities.

Ten others remain missing as search and rescue efforts in the area continue to be carried out, said Xinhua.

China is no stranger to extreme weather but recent years have seen the country hit by severe floods, grinding droughts and record heat.

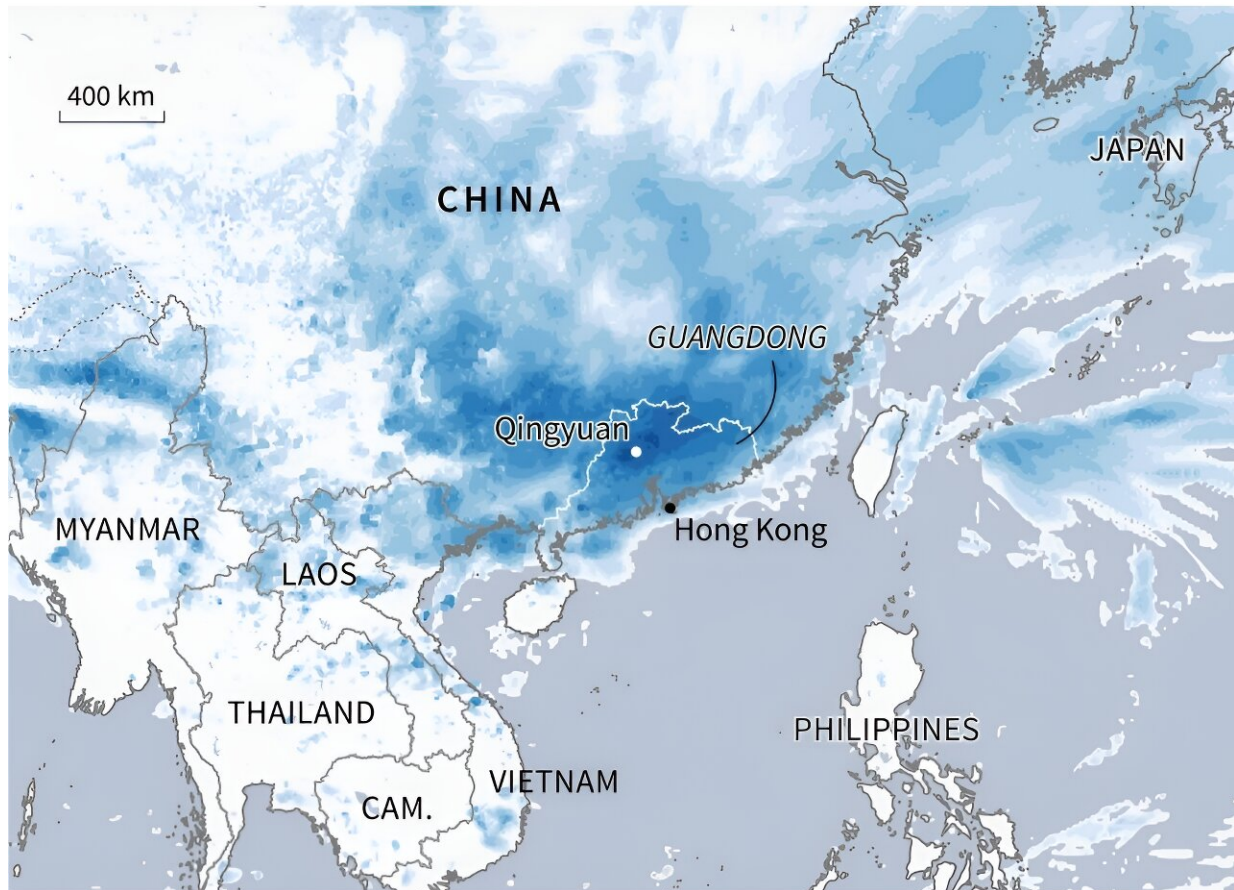
More than 110,000 people have been relocated across Guangdong, according to Xinhua.

Of those, more than 45,000 were evacuated from the northern city of Qingyuan, which straddles the banks of the Bei River, a tributary in the wider Pearl River Delta, state media reported Sunday.

Heavy rain is expected to continue on Monday, with meteorological authorities forecasting "thunderstorms and strong winds in Guangdong's coastal waters"—a stretch of sea bordering major cities including Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

Heavy rain in southern China

April 20: 3-day accumulated precipitation (mm)



Source: NASA Global Precipitation Measurement

AFP 

Map of China showing 3-day accumulated rainfall as of April 20, according to NASA data.

Yellow alert

Neighboring provinces, including parts of Fujian, Guizhou and Guangxi,

will also be affected by "short-term heavy rainfall", the National Meteorological Centre said.

"It is expected that the main impact period of strong convection will last from daytime until night," it added.

Authorities on Monday issued a yellow alert for rainstorms—the second-lowest in its four-tier system—with high levels of precipitation expected to continue across large swathes of the country.

Guangdong province is China's densely populated manufacturing heartland, home to around 127 million people.

In the town of Jiangwan, six people were injured and a number were trapped in landslides caused by heavy rain on Sunday, state media reported.

Photographs published by state broadcaster CCTV showed waterfront homes destroyed by a wall of brown mud, and people sheltering in a soaked public sports court.

CCTV reported Sunday that floods as high as 5.8 meters (19 feet) above the warning limit would strike in Pearl River tributaries on Monday morning.

Climate change driven by human-emitted greenhouse gases makes extreme weather events more frequent and intense, and China is the world's biggest emitter.

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