

# *Hurricane Florence death toll reaches 37 as threat of toxic coal ash release looms*

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Wilmington, September 19 (RHC)-- In the United States, the death toll from Hurricane Florence has reached 37 while the rivers in the Carolinas continue to rise from the record-breaking storm. Tens of thousands of homes have been damaged.

The city of Wilmington, North Carolina remains largely cut off from the rest of the state. Earlier, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper warned the worst flooding may still be to come. He said: "This is an epic storm that is still continuing because the rivers are rising in certain parts of our state, some areas have not seen the worst flooding yet, so this is a monumental disaster for our state that affects many of our counties, many of our people."

The rains have also swamped coal ash dumps and open-air hog manure pits, adding to the storm's devastation. Duke Energy says 2,000 cubic yards of coal ash were released amid Tropical Depression Florence's massive flooding in North Carolina. That's enough ash to fill roughly 180 dump trucks. The toxic ash could run off into the nearby Cape Fear River.

Meanwhile, a massive typhoon in southeast Asia has killed at least 74 in the Philippines and forced more

than three million people to evacuate their homes in China. Scores more are feared dead following a landslide in the small Philippines mining town of Itogon. Many died in a chapel where they had taken shelter.

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