

Flooding in Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina with Record Rainfall



Rio de Janeiro, June 12 (Mercopress-RHC) -- Floods have killed nine people and driven tens of thousands of people from their homes while swelling rivers to record levels in southern Brazil and neighboring Paraguay and Argentina, authorities said.

The stadium and training facilities in Curitiba, one of the World Cup's host cities, have not been affected by the situation.

The civil defense department in Brazil's Parana state said that 132 cities have been flooded, including parts of the state capital of Curitiba that will host four World Cup games. In total 3,000 people have been forced to evacuate due to torrential rains upstream.

Curitiba City Hall spokesman Alvaro Borba said the Arena da Baixada stadium, the training center, hotels and tourist sites are nowhere near the Borigui river that overflowed its banks.

Meanwhile in Paraguay, flooding has forced the evacuation of about 150,000 people in the capital city Asunción, authorities reported. After days of heavy rains helped swell the Paraguay and Parana rivers, floodwaters have so far sent an estimated 30,000 families to local shelters, the government said.

Housed in a military facility, they were visited Tuesday by President Horacio Cartes, who pledged ongoing

help.

Paraguay's National Emergency Office director, Joaquin Roa, said Cartes had made available funds for evacuation assistance across the mostly rural country.

The Iguazu and Parana rivers that Brazil shares with Paraguay and Argentina rose to historic levels, forcing authorities to open two major hydroelectric dams above the world-renowned Iguazu Falls, where the water flow increased nearly 30-fold, from 1,500 cubic meters per second to 43,000 meters per second, topping the previous record of 36,000 set in 1992.

The park's viewing areas were closed to tourists and employees removed walkways that would otherwise be destroyed. On the Brazilian side, the rising water swallowed the cement viewing platform where thousands of tourists usually take selfies below the Devil's Gorge.

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