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Tokyo, August 14 (RHC)-- Japan's meteorological service has put three prefectures and the city of Hiroshima on the highest possible emergency alert, which means it's too late to evacuate elsewhere, as torrential rains cause flooding and mudslides.

The highest-possible Level 5 "special" weather warning was issued for Saga, Nagasaki and Fukuoka prefectures in the country's southwest on Saturday, as rains continue to batter parts of Japan. Earlier, the

same warning was issued for the city of Hiroshima after several rivers running through the region were deemed at high risk of overflowing.

In its advisory on Saturday, the Japan Meteorological Agency said that “there is a high possibility that some kind of disaster has already occurred” in the areas that are especially prone to mudslides and flooding. “It's been raining heavily like never before,” the agency noted.

The agency pointed out that it was “too late to evacuate if the special warning is announced.” The Level 5 alert is considered to be a stage “beyond evacuation,” when residents are urged to take whatever action is needed to protect their lives, such as moving to a higher floor if they are hunkering down at home.

The highest-level alert now applies to more than one million people, NHK estimated.

Another 4.28 million people have been subject to a Level 4 evacuation warning, which is currently in effect for 17 prefectures. While the Japanese government does not issue formal evacuation orders, the residents in affected areas were encouraged to evacuate as quickly as possible.

Unprecedented rainfall turned roads into rivers, with footage shared by Japan's NHK broadcaster showing a truck washed away in a torrent of water.

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