

At least 10 people killed, several missing in flooding in Italy



Rescue workers rescue people on a dinghy boat on a flooded street after heavy rains hit the east coast of Marche region in Senigallia, Italy?

Rome, September 16 (RHC)-- Floodwaters triggered by heavy rainfall have swept through several towns in a hilly region of central-east Italy, leaving 10 people dead and several missing, according to state radio.

Dozens of survivors scrambled onto rooftops or up trees to await rescue early on Friday.

“It wasn’t a water bomb, it was a tsunami,” Barbara Mayor Riccardo Pasqualini told Italian state radio, describing the sudden downpour on Thursday evening that devastated his town in the Marche region near the Adriatic Sea. While firefighters said seven deaths were confirmed and three people were missing, RAI state radio said there were 10 confirmed deaths.

Two children, including one swept out of his mother’s arms by rushing waters in Barbara were among four people still unaccounted for by late Friday morning. A mother and her daughter, aged about 8, who were trying to escape the floodwaters were missing in Barbara, the mayor told the Italian news agency ANSA.

Rescue workers carry people on a dinghy boat on a flooded street in Senigallia after heavy rains hit the east coast of the Marche region [Vigili del Fuoco/Handout via Reuters]

Many of the 300 firefighters deployed waded through waist-high water in flooded streets, while others operated rubber dinghies to scoop up survivors along their path.

Firefighters said on Twitter that they had rescued dozens of people from cars, rooftops and clinging to trees. Helicopters were also deployed to pluck people to safety in the more remote towns. “It was an extreme event, more than an exceptional one,” climatologist Massimiliano Fazzini told state TV.

He said that based on his calculations the amount of rain that fell, concentrated over four hours and in particular in a 15-minute period, was the most in hundreds of years. Some of the worst flooding struck the town of Senigallia, while small towns in the hills near the Renaissance tourist town of Urbino were also deluged when fast-moving rivers of water, mud and debris rushed through streets.

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