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Louisville, August 1 (RHC)-- Torrential flooding in the U.S. state of Kentucky has now killed 35 people, including at least four children. Rain continues to pound the region as search-and-rescue teams push forward with the grim task of searching for the missing.

Speaking on Monday, Governor Andy Beshear announced a number of newly confirmed deaths in an update on the floods that have battered eastern Kentucky, prompting emergency declarations.

“If things weren’t hard enough on the people of this region, they’re getting rain right now,” Beshear said, noting a number of counties remained under a flash-flood warning as of Monday morning. “There is severe storm potential today in all of the impacted areas, and that is just not right.”

Beshear visited affected areas on Sunday and described “just total devastation, the likes of which we have never seen” after similar tours last week.

The region has had little respite from rain that has continued to fall, complicating rescue efforts and sweeping away entire communities. The displacement and destruction wrought by the floods are the latest examples of a country reeling from the effects of natural disasters exacerbated by climate change.

Hundreds of people are still missing, and the National Weather Service (NWS) has warned that rain and thunderstorms could create more flash flooding through Tuesday.

Beshear also warned high winds could cause trees and poles to fall over, creating additional hazards. According to The Associated Press news agency, about 400 stranded people have been rescued by helicopter.

Beshear declared a state of emergency last Thursday, and US President Joe Biden approved Kentucky’s request for a federal disaster declaration in 13 of the state’s counties, opening up resources for recovery efforts.

In a statement from the White House last Friday, Biden said resources were being made available for “areas affected by severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides”.

Beshear has said progress is being made to reestablish mobile phone coverage in flooded areas after outages complicated relief efforts. More than 12,000 remain without power, but Beshear has celebrated progress towards restoring coverage.

Meanwhile, in states such as Texas and California, extreme heat has tested the limits of infrastructure and fuelled enormous wildfires, prompting evacuations. Scientists have warned climate change is making weather disasters more common.

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