

Brazil's president Lula tours area affected by rains in Sao Paulo



Lula interrupted his rest during the carnival holiday to travel to the affected region on the coast of Sao Paulo and meet with local authorities. | Photo: Twitter @AlpargataTech????

Brasilia, February 20 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva traveled this Monday to Sao Sebastiao, in the state of Sao Paulo, to attend to the emergency caused by heavy rains, which have triggered landslides and floods with a preliminary balance of 36 people dead.

Brazilian authorities continue Monday the search for at least 40 people after the heavy rainstorm that hit the coast of the state of Sao Paulo over the weekend. Lula interrupted his rest during the carnival holiday to travel to the affected region on the coast of Sao Paulo and meet with local authorities.

From Sao Sebastiao, the municipality hardest hit by the rains, which exceeded 600 millimeters in less than eight hours, Lula flew over the region.

The president traveled with several of his ministers: Márcio França, Port and Airports; Simone Tebet, Planning and Budgets; Paulo Pimenta, Secretary of Communication; Alexandre Padilha, Institutional Relations; Waldez Góes, Integration and Regional Development; and Renan Filho, Transportation.

Lula is scheduled to meet with the Governor of Sao Paulo, Tarcísio de Freitas, and the Mayor of Sao Sebastiao, Felipe Augusto, followed by a press conference.

Rescue teams - more than 500 people including police, firefighters and military - continue to search for survivors after the storm, which also caused 228 people to abandon their homes and 338 to become homeless.

In a message broadcast last night on Twitter, Lula said that all levels of government will unite to, with the solidarity of society, assist the injured, search for the missing, restore roads, power and telecommunications connections in the region. Lula regretted the deaths caused by the rains and expressed his solidarity with the families.

More than 500 people, including police, firefighters and members of the Armed Forces, are participating in the rescue and identification of the victims of the heavy rains that have caused numerous damages and 1,717 evacuees in several localities of the region.

The most affected municipality is Sao Sebastiao, where 35 of the 36 deaths have been recorded, according to the latest official balance.

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