

Extreme weather conditions wreak havoc in Germany, Spain and Canada



Chaos at Frankfurt airport after flooding causes disruptions
Flooding from heavy rainfall has caused flight cancellations and delays at Germany

Berlin, August 18 (RHC)-- Extreme weather conditions linked to climate change have wreaked havoc in Germany, Spain and Canada, causing evacuations and disruptions in people's livelihoods and schedules due to floods and a heat wave. Water flooded streets and metro stations and led to dozens of flight cancellations at Frankfurt airport on Thursday as extremely heavy rain deluged parts of Germany.

Southwest Germany was hit hardest by rain on Wednesday evening, with huge quantities of water damaging the sewage, causing waste water to fill the streets in some city areas.

Reportedly, clouds unleashed more than 25,000 bolts of lightning in about an hour. Some 90 flights were cancelled and about two dozen more were re-routed due to the situation at Frankfurt airport, the country's busiest and a main European hub.

An airport spokesman told AFP that there were still passengers whose schedules had been disrupted and needed to be booked on new flights. Frankfurt's fire department said it had launched more than 500 operations from Wednesday evening to Thursday morning, adding that there were more than 350 instances of water flooding into buildings and 17 fallen trees. Off-duty firemen were summoned to work to help manage the situation.

In Spain, officials warned that a fire at tourist destination, which had started on Tuesday night, was now "out of control." The head of the regional government, Fernando Clavijo, said, "The Tenerife fire is out of control; the scenario is not exactly very positive."

The wildfire that broke out in a national park on the island of Tenerife has spread to 1,800 hectares, prompting authorities to order the evacuation of five villages and cut off access to the forest surrounding the Mount Teide volcano.

The Spanish official said thousands of people had been advised to either evacuate or remain confined in their location.

The wildfire, located in the north of the island which is a key tourist destination, had a nearly 30-kilometer-long perimeter. "This is probably the most complicated blaze we have had on the Canary Islands, if not ever, in at least the last 40 years," Clavijo told reporters. Extreme temperatures on the island, he said, added to "specific meteorological conditions" caused by the fire that turned the area into a virtual oven.

The main goal is to contain the fire and prevent it from reaching more populated areas, officials said. The island's main town, Santa Cruz, is just 20 kilometers from the flames.

Canadian fire crews battle to prevent wildfires from reaching the northern city of Yellowknife after authorities declared an evacuation order.

In Canada, residents are experiencing their worst-ever wildfire season, with more than 1,000 active fires burning across the country, including 265 in the Northwest Territories. Scientists say climate change has exacerbated the wildfire problem in Canada.

Drought has been a contributing factor to the number and intensity of this year's fires, officials say, with high temperatures exacerbating the situation. Much of Canada has been abnormally dry as scientists warn climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather occurrences.



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