

New York declares emergency as death toll from Ida storm rises

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The New York authorities have urged people to not go outside [Reuters]

New York, September 2 (RHC)-- The governors of New York and New Jersey have declared states of emergency amid widespread rains, flooding and reported tornadoes as the remnants of Hurricane Ida hit the US northeast on Wednesday.

The storm had hit the southern US states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida on Sunday, flooding neighbourhoods, causing widespread power outages and killing at least six people. Reconnaissance flights on Wednesday revealed entire communities devastated by winds and floods in Southern Louisiana, as officials continued to assess the damage.

The death toll from the storm reportedly doubled as it crossed the US northeast on Wednesday, with flood waters submerging parts of New York City and New Jersey and reported tornadoes ripping through parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency as remnants of Ida caused enormous flooding in New York City and other parts of the state on Wednesday. "I am declaring a state of emergency to help New Yorkers affected by tonight's storm," Hochul tweeted.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy had also declared a state of emergency in response to Ida, as did New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio earlier in the night.

"We're enduring an historic weather event tonight with record breaking rain across the city, brutal flooding and dangerous conditions on our roads," the mayor said, as New York City put in place a travel ban until 5 AM ET (9 GMT) Thursday for all non-emergency vehicles.

Meanwhile, the National Weather Service said it recorded 8 centimetres (3.15 inches) of rain in New York's Central Park in one hour Wednesday night, far surpassing the 4.9 centimetres (1.94 inches) that fell in one hour during Tropical Storm Henri on the night of August 21 – believed at the time to be the most ever recorded in the iconic park.

For the first time ever, the National Weather Service also issued a Flood Flood Emergency for about 9.1 million New Yorkers considered at risk, urging them to find higher ground.

NBC New York reported that a mother and son died in flood water in their home in the neighbourhood of Jamaica in the Queens borough of New York City. Another woman was also found dead in her home in the borough after emergency services responded to reports of flooding there.

The broadcaster reported that another man was found unresponsive in Brooklyn home emergency personnel responded to more reports of flooding. His cause of death was still being determined.

The storm invoked memories of Superstorm Sandy, a 2012 storm that swept across the Atlantic and caused widespread devastation in New York City, New Jersey, and the surrounding areas.

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