

Hurricane Ida death toll rises as recovery efforts continue

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A car stands in floodwaters after remnants of Ida brought drenching rain, flash floods and tornadoes to parts of the Northeast in Mamaroneck, New York, on September 2 [File: Mike Segar/Reuters]

New York, September 6 (RHC)-- The death toll from Hurricane Ida has risen to at least 50 people in the northeastern United States, while authorities in the southern state of Louisiana where the powerful storm first made landfall worked to restore power to hundreds of thousands of people.

Seventeen deaths were confirmed in New York state, four in Westchester County and the remainder were in New York City, a spokesperson for Governor Kathy Hochul said on Sunday.

Nearly all the victims in New York City, which was hard-hit when the remains of Ida brought flash flooding and heavy rains to the area last week, were trapped in illegal basement apartments that are among the last remaining affordable options for low-income residents.

In New Jersey, there were 27 confirmed storm deaths and four people still missing, said a spokesperson for Governor Phil Murphy. More deaths in the northeast were reported in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Ida made landfall in Louisiana as a Category 4 hurricane on August 29, bringing extreme winds that downed trees and power lines, and cut power to more than one million people across the state.

The storm-related death toll in Louisiana rose to 13 on Sunday, the state health department said on Twitter, after a 74-year-old man was reported dead “due to heat during an extensive power outage”. More than 630,000 homes and businesses remained without power on Sunday across southeast Louisiana, according to the state Public Service Commission.

Many Louisiana residents continue to face food, water and gas shortages while battling heat and humidity a week after Ida struck. Fully restoring electricity to some southeastern parishes could take until the end of the month, Entergy President and CEO Phillip May said on Saturday.

Ida damaged or destroyed at least 22,000 power poles, more than hurricanes Katrina, Zeta and Delta combined. More than 5,200 transformers failed and nearly 26,000 spans of wire – the stretch of transmission wires between poles – were down.

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