

Death toll climbs to 169 after landslides in Petrópolis

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Brasilia, February 21 (RHC)-- The fatalities in the city of Petrópolis, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, total 169 as a result of landslides caused by heavy rains registered last Tuesday, according to the new report of the Brazilian authorities, while three other states were also affected by the rainfall.

The number of missing people in Petrópolis is 213 and the number of dead reached 152 -of which 97 had been identified until the night of Saturday 19. Another 24 people have been rescued since the beginning of the operation.

The storm, which hit this mountain town in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in the southeast of Brazil, caused the displacement of almost a thousand people.

The search for missing persons in Petrópolis reaches its sixth day this Sunday, with more rain forecast, making rescue work more difficult and increasing the risk of new landslides.

Municipal officials and neighbors work with tractors, bulldozers, shovels and even with their bare hands to remove debris, clear streets and try to give an air of normality to the mountain town.

In recent days, the search has been interrupted several times by rain. A heavy fog on Saturday also hampered the work, which is now supported by firefighters from other states.

With the unstable weather in Petrópolis, Colonel Leandro Monteiro, state secretary of Civil Defense and commander of the firefighters, explained that he cannot advance with heavy machinery, such as tractors, anywhere.

The death toll from the rains in the states of Bahia, Minas Gerais, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro now stands at 254, according to Civil Defense.

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