

Death toll from floods in Brazil rises to 165

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Several areas of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, continue to be flooded by the flooding of the Guaíba River. | Photo: EFE

Brasilia, May 26 (RHC)-- The death toll from the floods affecting southern Brazil increased to 165, according to the latest balance provided by the Civil Defense of the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

According to the security entity, a total of 806 people have been injured, 64 are missing and more than 581,000 citizens have lost their homes. The Civil Defense report of Rio Grande do Sul maintains the figure of 469 affected municipalities, with more than 2,345,000 people affected.

For its part, the National Water Agency indicated that the water level of the Guaíba River dropped 17 centimeters in 12 hours, but still exceeds 4 meters, which means that several areas of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, continue to be flooded.

A group of researchers from the Hydraulic Research Institute of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul warned of lasting flooding, with levels still high for Saturday and the coming days.

“Guaiba levels should increase due to the predicted winds and the maintenance of levels due to the rains that have already occurred this week and the expected rains next week, prolonging the flooding,” the researchers' report says.

The health authorities of the South American country warned that in the refugee camps in Rio Grande do Sur, more than 800 suspected cases of leptospirosis are being investigated.

According to the Ministry of Health, some 54 cases of the disease have been confirmed this month, at least four people have died from the virus and four other suspected cases are still being investigated.

Health agencies warned that cases have multiplied due to contact with water contaminated with urine from rats and other animals that suffer from the disease. Given the health situation, the authorities recommended that the population seek immediate medical attention for symptoms such as fever, pain, headache and body weakness.

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