

12 Dead and at Least 20 Missing in Chile Deluge



Santiago de Chile, March 30 (teleSUR-RHC) At least 12 people have died and 20 remain missing after intense rains and flooding in three northern desert regions of Chile this week.

In Atacama alone, the worst affected region, some 5,584 people have been forced to seek shelter, with around 14,000 homes affected by the deluge.

According to President Michelle Bachelet, the number of victims could keep rising. "It is highly likely that there are more deaths and a significant number of disappearances," she said, speaking from Santiago de Chile after a three-day journey around the affected area.

"It is a heartbreaking panorama and there are other situations that could have been infinitely worse." Nearly 275 tons of humanitarian aid have been sent to the affected regions, while little by little authorities are trying to replace basic services. However, cities like Copiapo are 80 percent covered in mud. Due to looting the government was forced to order a curfew between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The calamity in the Chilean desert region takes place at the same time that the South American country struggles with huge wildfires in the drought-stricken Araucania region, where firefighters have been battling the flames for more than a week.

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