

107 dead in China's brutal winter storms

by UPI

BEIJING -- China's catastrophic winter weather killed 107 people and caused \$15.4 billion in damage, the official Xinhua news agency reported Thursday. Eight more people were listed as missing in the ferocious winter weather that lashed nearly half of the country beginning in the middle of January. The report said 21 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities had been affected by the powerful freak storms. Nearly 2 million people were stranded before finding transport, 1.5 million people had to be relocated, and about 354,000 homes were destroyed. The weather systems affected about 60 million acres of farmland and 46 million acres of forests. The Chinese finance ministry said it has already spent \$375 million on relief measures in the past month. Vice Minister of Civil Affairs Li Liguo said his ministry would work with the ministries of commerce, agriculture and health to ensure that residents in disaster-stricken areas have sufficient food, clothing and shelter and adequate medical services, Xinhua reported. He said his ministry also has arranged to raise subsistence allowances for low-income earners in urban areas.

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