

71 die in torrential rains in China

by UPI

BEIJING - The Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs said 71 people died as a result of torrential rains over the last week in southern China.

The ministry said the rains, which are expected to resume within the next few days, also caused a great deal of property damage, Xinhua, China's official government-run news agency, reported Tuesday.

"Mud slides and floods triggered by widespread rainstorms have also left 13 people missing, affected about 350,200 hectares (865,363 acres) of crops, completely destroying 57,600 hectares (142,332 acres) of them," a ministry official said.

The official said that since the start of the storms last week in Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Jiangxi and Fujian provinces, the number of houses destroyed by floods has reached 56,000 and the number of houses damaged by the weather has reached 104,000, Xinhua reported. The official said about 643,000 people had fled their homes because of the storms.

The ministry said the storms have caused an overall economic loss of \$436 million, with half the losses taking place in the agriculture sector, the Xinhua report said.

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