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## Trump Visits Texas to Defend Federal Flood Response

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President Donald Trump traveled to Central Texas on Friday to survey the aftermath of catastrophic flash floods that have killed at least 120 people and left over 160 missing. The visit was aimed at highlighting federal and state relief efforts while also responding to criticism over the federal government's initial response to the disaster.

Flash floods surged through entire neighborhoods in minutes, overwhelming local emergency systems and raising questions about whether FEMA's restructuring and new spending rules hindered preparedness. FEMA's deployment of Urban Search and Rescue teams was delayed by over 72 hours due to new Department of Homeland Security rules

requiring the Homeland Security Secretary's approval for any FEMA expenditure over \$100,000.

President Trump, accompanied by First Lady Melania Trump, met with first responders, local officials, and affected families, stating that the White House was coordinating with Texas Governor Greg Abbott and other state leaders to support recovery efforts.

"It's a no-brainer – you go out there and you let people know you care about them," said a person close to the president. Trump, who often refers to himself as a fixer, has sought to show compassion and resolve in a state that strongly supported him politically.

Critics, including Democratic lawmakers, have warned that the administration's proposed restructuring of FEMA and reduction of federal disaster funding could undermine future response, and some have questioned whether staffing cuts to NOAA and the National Weather Service affected earlier warnings. White House officials dismissed these concerns as politicizing a national tragedy.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem defended the federal response but asserted that FEMA must be reorganized, advocating for states to assume greater responsibility for disaster management, with Washington in a supporting role.

Trump's Texas visit was also viewed by allies as politically significant, reinforcing his alignment with supportive communities; observers noted that his engagement in Texas contrasts sharply with his often-strained interactions with California leaders during past wildfire crises.

As the recovery continues, the debate over how much responsibility the federal government should carry in natural disasters is likely to grow louder, even as families in Texas start to rebuild their lives.

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