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Texas Floods Leave Over 160 Missing as Search Efforts Continue

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The search for missing people in Central Texas has stretched into a grim fifth day, as rescue crews race against time and difficult weather. Catastrophic flash floods struck the area over the weekend, swelling rivers to historic levels and sweeping away homes, vehicles, and entire summer camps.

Governor Greg Abbott confirmed that as of July 8, 109 confirmed dead, 161 missing statewide, all 161 in Kerr County across multiple counties. Kerr County, a rural region west of Austin known as part of “flash flood alley,” suffered the heaviest toll. There, the Guadalupe River rose 26 feet in less than an hour, fast enough to catch even experienced residents off guard.

Among the most tragic scenes was at Camp Mystic, a girls’ summer camp along the river near the town of Hunt. Floodwaters crashed into cabins while campers were still asleep. At least 27 children and counselors died, and five campers and one counselor remain missing, who have not been found. Survivors described waking to water pouring through windows and the struggle to escape in the darkness.

President Donald Trump has approved a federal disaster declaration, clearing the way for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to deploy specialized teams. Hundreds of local, state, and federal responders, along with volunteers, are combing the riverbanks and

debris fields. Texas Game Warden Ben Baker called the situation “especially heartbreaking” because so many victims are children.

The Department of Health and Human Services plans to declare a public health emergency in the affected areas to allow more mental health support and medical resources to arrive quickly. Officials say the combination of ongoing storms, dangerous currents, and heavy debris has slowed recovery efforts.

Serious questions have emerged about whether residents received enough warning. While the National Weather Service issued 22 escalating alerts, many local families said they did not realize the danger until it was too late. Kerr County officials admitted the area did not have a public siren system in place due to funding constraints, even though the region has a history of flash flooding.

State leaders have pledged to review emergency plans and improve warning systems to help prevent similar tragedies in the future. As the water slowly recedes, rescue teams continue their difficult work, holding out hope for any sign of survivors.

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