

Flash Floods Kill 3 in New Mexico Town Still Reeling from Wildfires

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A small mountain village in southern New Mexico is grappling with heartbreak after catastrophic flash flooding killed three people, including two young children of a soldier stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas.

The tragedy unfolded in Ruidoso, about 180 miles south of Albuquerque, when heavy monsoon rains drenched the region. The rain fell on areas burned by the South Fork and Salt fires in June 2024, where the scorched soil can no longer absorb water. The result was a sudden, deadly surge that turned the usually shallow Rio Ruidoso into a raging torrent.

Officials said the river crested at more than 20 feet, surpassing the previous record set during the 2024 floods. The floodwaters swept away a 4-year-old girl, her 7-year-old brother, and a man estimated to be between 40 and 50 years old. The children's parents, a soldier and the soldier's spouse, were seriously injured and are recovering in a Texas hospital.

"Our hearts are heavy with grief following this devastating loss," said Brigadier General Rory Crooks, deputy commanding general of the 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss.

Ruidoso Mayor Lynn Crawford described the flood as one of the worst disasters the village has faced. "This one hit us harder than we were expecting," he said. Before the rains, the river was so small that residents could jump across it. Within hours, it turned into a deadly torrent that carried away homes, vehicles, and debris.

Emergency crews worked through the night and into the next day, conducting 65 rescues in the fast-moving water. Four people remain missing, and 20 residents have been displaced. Three people were hospitalized and are in stable condition.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham submitted an emergency declaration request to the federal government to secure aid, noting that Ruidoso has suffered repeated disasters in just over a year. "This crisis demands immediate action," she said.

As the community begins to clean up, recovery efforts face another threat: hazardous heat. The National Weather Service warned that temperatures could reach or exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the coming days, posing risks for both residents and rescue workers.

Ruidoso, home to about 7,600 people in the Sierra Blanca mountain range, has long been vulnerable to flooding. But with burn scars still raw and the monsoon season underway, residents fear more danger may be ahead.

"We are united in our sorrow and our commitment to supporting one another," Mayor Crawford said.

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