

## Calamity State: Floods Kill 84 in the South of Brazil

Contributed by Newsroom  
Wednesday, 26 November 2008

The president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, is expected to sign this Wednesday, November 26, a temporary measure authorizing emergency resources to deal with rescue and recovery action in the areas affected by a severe flood in the southern state of Santa Catarina.

The rainfalls that have been hitting that area since the weekend causing flooding and landslides have devastated the region and have already killed 84 people, according to a report released by Santa Catarina's Civil Defense department this Tuesday afternoon.

Over 1.5 million people were affected by the rains. leaving 150,000 without electricity. 54,000 had to leave their homes and look for public shelter or find a place to stay at the home of friends or relatives. Heavy rains caused mudslides, which covered houses and businesses and washed out roads.

Officials said there is still a risk of more landslides. Flooding also cut natural gas supplies after rupturing a pipeline that runs from Bolivia to Brazil.

The town of Ilhota was the hardest hit by the floods, with 15 people killed after waters rose more than nine meters above normal.

Another 13 people died when they were buried by mudslides in the city of Blumenau - a tourist attraction founded by German immigrants and known for its annual Oktoberfest celebration.

Eight municipalities continue isolated due to landslides on the highways. They are São Bonifácio, Luiz Alves, São João Batista, Rio dos Cedros, Garuva, Pomerode, Itapoia and Benedito Novo.

Four federal roads (BR-101, BR-470, BR-282 and BR-376) were closed in some stretches due to the flooding. Other eight state roads (SC-401, SC-431, SC-408, SC-302, SC-474, SC-413, SC-416, SC-466) had also to be blocked in some areas.

Most of the deaths occurred in the cities of Blumenau (20), Gaspar (17), Ilhota (15) and Jaraguá do Sul (12). There were also fatal victims in Luiz Alves (4), Rodeio (4), Rancho Queimado (2), Benedito Novo (2), Itajaí (2), Pomerode (1), Bom Jardim da Serra (1), Brusque (1), São Pedro de Alcântara (1) and Florianópolis (1), the capital of the state.

In seven municipalities it was declared an emergency situation; in another six, a state of public calamity.

Victims are being helped by firefighters and police. Five Air Force and Army helicopters are also being used in the rescue effort.

The Brazilian federal government announced that it will send another three helicopters and two planes with food and medicine.