

Khabarovsk Begins Evacuating Flooded Residents

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A man and his pet dog sitting outside a house on a bank of the flooded Amur River in Khabarovsk on Thursday. **Igor Churackoff / AP**

Khabarovsk authorities have started to evacuate people in several of the city's districts most affected by large-scale flooding, which has already forced more than 23,000 people in the Far East from their homes.

About 850 people from 11 apartment buildings are required to move to evacuation areas, but most people refused to leave their buildings, Itar-Tass reported Thursday.

The 15 evacuation points set up can accommodate 4,500 people, and Khabarovsk Mayor Alexander Sokolov ordered health services and hot meals to be provided at all the centers.

Authorities plan to increase the evacuation centers' capacity to 10,000 by using sports complexes and stadiums, Novy Region reported.

The flood waters, currently at 710 centimeters, are expected to peak at 780 centimeters

between Aug. 24 and Aug. 28, but the region's authorities said there would be no mass evacuations.

They estimate that only 40,000 people in the region would be affected, 3 percent of the population.

Meanwhile, the federal highway Khabarovsk-Komsomolsk-na-Amure is still open for traffic. More than 100 people have been working at all hours of the day to prevent flooding from a nearby lake from spilling on to the road.

"The work building earth walls is underway, but water overflow is still possible," said Vyacheslav Shport, acting governor of the Khabarovsk region.

While the road remains open, the region's Emergency Situations Ministry office banned passenger buses from using the highway at night.

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