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State of Emergency Lifted in Khabarovsk After Weeks of Floods

By The Moscow Times

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After nearly two months, the state of emergency declared after record flooding in the Khabarovsk region has been lifted, though residents still face the difficult task of cleaning up all the damage.

Emergency Situations Minister Vladimir Puchkov made the decision Thursday to lift the state of emergency, which was first declared Aug. 8, at a meeting about the government response to the Far East floods, Irina Rossius, a spokeswoman for the ministry, told Interfax.

Puchkov said the "main result" of the rescue effort was the fact that not a single person died in the floods, adding that the overall work by authorities was "on a high level."

Alexander Solovyev, head of the ministry's Far East center, said the flooding affected a total of 8 million square kilometers, making it the largest scale flooding observed in at least 115 years.

The flooding affected five regions in the Far East and saw thousands of people evacuated after several days of heavy rainfall caused the Amur River to overflow.

More than 135,000 residents were affected by the floods, with 32,000 people evacuated and 12,000 homes wiped out, Interfax reported.

Twelve billion dollars has been allocated from the federal budget for repairs and cleanup efforts throughout the Far East.

Residents whose homes were destroyed by the floods were promised compensation funds from the state budget. Komsomolskaya Pravda reported that 6,000 people who suffered the most severe damage received payouts of 100,000 rubles each.

Puchkov on Thursday praised emergency rescuers for their efforts. Thanks to their hard work, he said, there were no fatalities in the torrential floods. Even cats and dogs were evacuated from the hard-hit areas in boats, he said.

Although the state of emergency has been lifted, various areas still face the difficult task of cleaning up all the garbage and mud carried in by the floods. Khabarovsk, Komsomolsk-na-Amure and the Jewish autonomous region are currently in the worst shape, but rescue workers are assisting residents in the cleanup.

The states of emergency in the Amur region and the Jewish autonomous region were lifted Sept. 17.

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