

China evacuates 500,000 from Huaihe River floodplains

Nearly half a million people living along central China's Huaihe river were moved to safety as authorities issued warning for what they feared the worst flooding since 1954.

Three provincial authorities have mobilized 511,000 people to patrol the Huaihe embankments, according to information from the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters.

Tuesday's opening of 13 sluices to reduce the pressure of water could damage up to 12,000 hectares of cropland inside the 180-square-kilometer Mengwa flood storage area. The impact on the residents was expected to be limited, said local authorities.

Continuous torrential rain since late June has caused widespread flooding across China, especially in southern areas, including the Huaihe River valley, the provinces of Sichuan, Hubei, Shaanxi, Henan, Anhui and Jiangsu, and Chongqing Municipality.

Floods have affected more than 66.3 million Chinese this summer, with 360 people killed and losses amounting to 24.3 billion yuan, according to the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters.

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