

Kingdom



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Sunday 29 November 2009 (12 Dhul Hijjah 1430)

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Jeddah flood toll 106

Muhammad Humaidan | Arab News

JEDDAH: The death toll from Wednesday's flash floods here has climbed to 106, Civil Defense officials said on Saturday. More bodies are expected to be recovered as cleanup efforts continue with rescue and recovery teams assisted by helicopters.

Civil Defense personnel also began distributing relief supplies to displaced residents in Abruq Al-Regama district, which was struck by the floods. The aid is being distributed through several support centers. More than 1,200 families have been provided temporary housing.

Spokesman for Civil Defense Capt. Abdullah Al-Amri said 56 bodies were handed over, after identification, to their families and relatives for burial.

An operation center has been set up at the headquarters of Civil Defense in Jeddah, which includes officials from the Border Guard, the Jeddah Municipality and the Health Affairs Department.

Col. Ali ibn Zarban Al-Zahrani, director of public affairs of Border Guard in Makkah province, said his agency has dispatched 65 divers in dinghies to help rescue stranded families and recover bodies. Amateur divers have also joined the recovery efforts.

The Ministry of Transportation announced that Harmain Road would reopen on Sunday. Minister of Transport Jabara Al-Seraisy said all concerned government departments and a number of private companies were working day and night to make the road ready for passengers and pilgrims.

During a walk through of the hardest-hit areas, Arab News noticed growing anger among citizens against civic services. Many citizens said they would file complaints against these departments, accusing them of failure before, during and after the flooding. There are some reports of looting vacant, flooded homes.

Meanwhile, the floods have cemented solidarity among the citizens of Jeddah. A great number of youths have rushed to the eastern districts to rescue the victims and extend a helping hand to the needy.

Standing near the collapsed wall of King Abdulaziz University close to the Harmain Road, S. Al-Harbi, a young Saudi, told Arab News that he himself had pulled out a number of dead bodies.

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Prince Ahmed Bin Salman



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