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Outraged Saudis blast govt after deadly flood

Nov 28, 2009 at 17:11

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By Paul Handley

- Saudi floods death toll rises to 98
- Saudi floods leave 48 dead, 900 stranded

RIYADH - A Saudi lawyer said on Saturday he will sue the city of Jeddah, as thousands took to Facebook to blast authorities in a rare burst of open outrage after floods killed more than 100 people in the Red Sea port.

The toll jumped to 103 from Wednesday's floods after authorities discovered more bodies, Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya television reported late Saturday.

Human rights lawyer Walid Abu al-Kheir said families of victims of the disaster were supporting the lawsuit, which will allege massive mismanagement of city works construction by the Jeddah government as a key cause for the flooding.

"They didn't make the drainage work. They have told us for three years or more that it has been completed," he said. "Even people from the city government said there were mistakes."

Waleed said he planned to file his lawsuit next Saturday, when government offices and courts reopen after the two-week Eid al-Azha holiday.

A huge rainstorm sparked the flash floods, with many victims caught in their cars and drowning in two metres (6.5 feet) or more of water.

Roads were destroyed and cars and trucks left in piles after the waters receded on Thursday.

Electricity is still out in some of the worst hit parts of the city, the country's second largest after Riyadh.

With public protests banned in Saudi Arabia, Jeddah residents have taken to the Internet to attack the government.

More than 11,000 people joined a Facebook page created three days ago to complain about the floods, saving the

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