

Beat: Travel

At least 74 die as flash floods wipe out entire villages in Afghanistan

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USPA News - Flash floods triggered by torrential rains wiped out entire villages in Afghanistan's remote and mountainous north on Friday afternoon, killing at least 74 people and destroying more than 800 houses, Afghan and international aid officials said on Sunday. The flash floods on Friday afternoon destroyed most houses in five villages of Guzargah-e-Nur district of northeastern Baghlan province, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Afghanistan.

At least seven other villages were also affected by the floods. "Initial report says that most houses of Deh Qandi, Mir Khil, Jarawo, Dashta Khasa and Yaho villages have been destroyed and more than 100 people killed due to flood," OCHA's Kunduz office said in an initial report on Saturday. The Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) said 74 people had been confirmed dead by Sunday. Dominic Parker, deputy head of the OCHA in Afghanistan, said blocked roads in the area made it difficult to gather more precise details about the extent of the disaster. He said six injured survivors were taken to a hospital in the provincial capital of Pulkhumri, where three of them remained in a critical condition. "Police have carried out search and rescue operations, while Afghan National Army (ANA) and ANA helicopters have been assisting in the emergency relief work," OCHA said in a situation report. "An inter-agency assessment is being assembled today and is planning to reach the district center of Guzargah-e-Nur tomorrow, from where it will carry out a rapid assessment to determine the relief needs." Seasonal rains and spring snow melt regularly results in devastating flash floods in northern Afghanistan, which is at a high risk for such disasters due to its geographical location and environmental degradation. Last month, at least 350 and as many as 2,700 people were killed when a massive landslide buried hundreds of homes in the Argo District of northeastern Badakhshan province.

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