

# Death toll in Indian floods passes 200: officials

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BANGALORE, India (AFP) – Hundreds of thousands of people in southern India were evacuated after torrential rains and floods swept away homes, leaving at least 207 people dead, officials said Sunday.

The death toll in the state of Karnataka stood at 170, while 37 people were killed in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, authorities said.

"The deaths are largely due to houses collapsing, drownings and flash floods," H.V. Parashwanath, secretary of Karnataka's disaster monitoring agency, told AFP.

Rescue efforts by the army, navy and air force intensified as they attempted to reach villages surrounded by flooded fields.

A team from India's National Disaster Response Force was also deployed, and officials said relief operations were working to halt any outbreak of disease.

"We are deploying medical teams in the affected areas to prevent the occurrence of epidemics," said S. Subramanyam, special commissioner for disaster management in the Andhra Pradesh capital Hyderabad.

Water levels were receding and rainfall had returned to normal in some areas, but dams continued to overflow as the river Krishna in Karnataka breached its banks.

Residents faced misery after the floods washed away the mud and stones holding their poorly-constructed homes together.

Almost 600 relief centres were sheltering more than 170,000 people in north Karnataka, the area hit hardest by heavy rainfall.

In Andhra Pradesh, 270,000 people were gathered in more than 100 shelters.

Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa conducted an aerial survey of the flood zones and has also written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asking him to declare the situation a national disaster, the Press Trust of India reported.

The news agency said Yeddyurappa also asked for two billion dollars in aid to rebuild destroyed towns and villages.

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20091004/wl\\_sthasia\\_afp/indiaweatherfloods](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20091004/wl_sthasia_afp/indiaweatherfloods)