

Zoo animals roam loose in Georgia's capital after flooding

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Tbilisi, Georgia: Tigers, lions, a hippopotamus and other animals have escaped from the zoo in Georgia's capital after heavy flooding destroyed their enclosures, prompting authorities to warn residents in Tbilisi to stay inside Sunday. At least eight people have been killed in the disaster, including three zoo workers, and 10 others are missing.

An escaped hippo was cornered in one of the city's main squares and subdued with a tranquilizer gun, the zoo said. Some other animals also have been seized, but it remained unclear how many are on the loose. Bears and wolves are also among the animals who fled from their enclosures amid the flooding from heavy rains and high winds.

There were no immediate reports that any of the other fatalities were due to animal attacks. The zoo said one of the dead was Guliko Chitadze, a zookeeper who lost an arm in an attack by a tiger last month.

Heavy rains and wind hit Tbilisi during the night, turning a normally small stream that runs through the hilly city into a surging river. The flooding also damaged dozens of houses.

City mayor David Narmania told journalists that eight people were known to have died and 10 others were missing.

Helicopters are circling the city and residents have been told to stay indoors except in an emergency. About 1.1 million people live in the former Soviet republic's capital.