

Storm kills 18 in China

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Beijing: Heavy storms that swept through several southern Chinese provinces this past week have killed 18 people and left four more missing, according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The storms have dumped more than 20 centimeters (nearly 8 inches) of rainfall in 48 hours on some towns, toppled thousands of homes, and dislocated tens of thousands of residents, the ministry said Friday.

The deaths were caused by house collapses, landslides, drowning or lightning.

Hubei province, where heaviest rainfalls were recorded, reported the highest death toll of 10. The local civil affairs agency said 664,000 people were affected.

In the neighboring province of Hunan, the storms affected 527,000 people.

Another five people were reported dead in the municipality of Chongqing. Guizhou province reported two deaths, and one person died in Anhui province.

- AP