

Millions affected by devastating floods in China

The recent floods which swept across 13 of China's 30 provinces were the worst in over fifty years, despite the fact that all types of natural disaster frequently afflict the vast territory which is home to

nearly one-quarter of the global population. Two hundred and twenty million people, almost one-fifth of the 1.1 billion inhabitants, were affected by the devastating floods following relentless storms which

began on 18 May and continued for over a month to deluge the nation's eastern provinces. More than nine million people were evacuated from the stricken areas, over two million houses collapsed and twice that

Villagers struggle to salvage possessions as the flood waters rise in Shou county, part of one of the worst-affected provinces, Anhui.



China News Agency
Photo

amount - together with some five thousand hospitals - were damaged. Remarkably, the death toll of 2,295 was light considering the scale and effect of the inundations. The direct economic loss was dramatically

high, and is estimated at 68.5 billion yuan (US \$12.9 billion), including the loss of 3.5 million tons of grain as a result of close to 20 million hectares of cropland being submerged by flood water.

The catastrophic situation was worsened by heavy rains in the north, a succession of typhoons which struck three southern provinces, and a drought so severe that five million people in a south-eastern province