



International Medical Corps and local partner Wings of Help are working to provide badly needed supplies to people affected by flooding in the Ahr Valley.

Flood waters from heavy rains on July 14–15 have receded, and recovery has begun in western Europe following the most devastating natural disaster in decades. Germany, the hardest-hit country, has seen entire towns inundated by water and at least 173 deaths.¹ According to officials, between 60,000 and 70,000 people have been displaced. With homes, public buildings, and utilities, transportation and communication infrastructure destroyed, recovery is likely to be a lengthy process. Though the full extent of the damage in Germany is not yet known, the federal government will provide up to €200 million in emergency aid and will provide another €250 million for the rehabilitation of damaged buildings and roadways. The expense of damages is expected to be in the billions,² with Ministry of Traffic officials estimating more than €2 billion in damage to transportation infrastructure alone.³ Insurance companies estimate that total damages and losses may exceed €5 billion (excluding losses in Bavaria and Saxony, and in Belgium and the Netherlands).

The worst flooding occurred in Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia along the Eifel mountain range. More than four inches of rain—nearly two months' worth—fell within a few hours in areas where the soil was already saturated. The flooding has washed away roads and transportation infrastructure; damaged homes, public buildings and vehicles; and crippled power, gas and water utilities, as well as the wastewater network.

In Belgium, the southeastern state of Wallonia—a largely French-speaking region that borders North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany—is among one of the worst-affected areas. In response to the severe flooding, authorities in Wallonia rushed to provide clean drinking water, particularly in the southern provinces of Namur, Liege and Luxembourg, where thousands were evacuated, and where the water supply was interrupted. As the flood waters have receded, residents have begun returning to find their homes destroyed and livelihoods swept away. On Saturday July 24, heavy rains again flooded Wallonia, washing away cars in Namur, Dinant and Walloon Brabant. Deputy Mayor Robert Closset said there are no

FAST FACTS

- Heavy rains on July 14–15 caused widespread flooding across Western Europe.
- According to German officials, 173 people have died and 158 are still missing or unaccounted for, making it Europe's deadliest flooding since 1985.
- Cities and towns in the Ahr Valley are still without power, gas and running water. Communications networks are partly unavailable.
- International Medical Corps has deployed a team and completed assessments, working with local partner Luffahrt ohne Grenzen (Wings of Help) and local government officials, identifying needs for the worst-affected area of Bad Bodendorf.

¹ <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/germany-more-than-150-people-still-missing-in-floods-unlikely-to-be-found/>

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-weather-germany-insurance-trfn/analysis-flood-hit-german-homes-face-higher-premiums-as-climate-risks-grow-idUSKBN2ET218>

³ [https://www.businessinsurance.com/article/20210721/STORY/912343365/Floods-cause-over-\\$2-billion-infrastructural-damage](https://www.businessinsurance.com/article/20210721/STORY/912343365/Floods-cause-over-$2-billion-infrastructural-damage)

reported injuries or deaths, but firefighters have been deployed to help.⁴ There have been at least 37 deaths in Belgium as a result of the flooding.

In the Netherlands, thousands have been forced to evacuate as a result of the floodwaters. Though the country has recorded no casualties, the southern province of Limburg, which was hardest hit by the flooding, has reported €400 million worth of damage. More than 2,300 homes suffered flood damage and need to dry out, a process that will take two to three months, leaving hundreds in need of temporary accommodation.⁵ The most severely affected municipalities are in Limburg, and include Roermond, Valkenburg and Venlo.

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps has deployed staff to conduct damage and needs assessments, and initiate immediate assistance, in Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Heppingen, Heimersheim, Bad Bodendorf and Sinzig City, where the team met with the Fire Brigade and emergency workers. International Medical Corps is working with long-time partner Luftfahrt ohne Grenzen (Wings of Help), a German NGO, to provide relief to affected populations.

The team observed areas where flood waters rose as high as eight meters, or 26 feet, above ground level, destroying even the upper levels of some homes and businesses. The highest-priority needs are for immediate relief items like jerry cans for water storage, water pumps for sludge and wastewater, generators to power pumps, safety equipment (such as boots, gloves and waders), tools and equipment for recovery (such as wheelbarrows, shovels, brushes, torches, cleaning equipment, garden hoses, pressure washers, dehumidifiers and fans), personal hygiene items and comfort items like toys for children.

International Medical Corps and Luftfahrt ohne Grenzen have so far delivered close to 250 tons of relief supplies—including water in reusable containers, and food and hygiene supplies, secured in collaboration with private-sector companies in Germany—and are preparing further deliveries to affected areas. The team is moving forward with its assessment and is initiating implementation of relief activities in Belgium and the Netherlands, working with Aviation sans Frontiers Belgium, Aviation sans Frontiers Netherlands, Red Cross Societies and disaster-management teams from local authorities. In the immediate response phase we plan to distribute urgently needed recovery supplies and equipment, similar to deliveries already made in Germany.



Damage and debris in the Bad Bodendorf and Sinzig areas.

⁴ <https://news.sky.com/story/belgium-devastated-by-flooding-for-second-time-in-just-over-a-week-12363369>

⁵ <https://netherlandsnewslive.com/damage-valkenburg-400-million-euros-2300-homes-damaged-700-of-which-are-uninhabitable/202911/>