

Beat: Miscellaneous

7 killed after hillside collapses onto Mexican highway

-, 28.05.2013, 02:21 Time

USPA News - Seven people were killed late Sunday and several others were injured when a hillside collapsed onto a major highway in central Mexico as a result of heavy rainfall, burying several vehicles under piles of mud and rock, officials said on Monday. The incident occurred at around 8 p.m. local time on Sunday near the 70 kilometer marker in the municipality of Tepeji del Rio in Mexico's central state of Hidalgo.

It happened on a major highway that connects the capital Mexico City and the city of Querétaro in the state that carries the same name. Gerardo Ruiz Esparza, the Secretary of Communications and Transportation, said the hillside collapsed after a hailstorm, strong winds and torrential rains affected the region. The collapse buried a total of five vehicles, including a taxi and two trucks, while the severe weather also damaged around 150 houses in the area. "We live in a country of mountains, in a country where roads have virtually been built through mountains, by the use of tunnels, and you have to live with them," Esparza said. "What happened yesterday is very unfortunate. It was an impressive storm. People who were there gave personal testimonies of ping-pong ball size hail." Rescue workers, which included Civil Protection officers, soldiers, firefighters and police officers, had recovered a total of seven bodies by Monday evening, including a nine-year-old child, while four others were treated for various injuries. It is not believed anyone else is still missing, but a search operation was continuing to clear the tons of mud and rock.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1029/7-killed-after-hillside-collapses-onto-mexican-highway.html>

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