

# Spain's Apocalyptic Floods Undeniable Truth: The Climate Crisis Is Getting Worse [C1]

Le devastanti alluvioni verificatesi negli ultimi mesi sono la prova che il cambiamento climatico è già una realtà. È urgente agire immediatamente e smettere di ignorare la situazione.

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[Move on](#). Nothing to see here. Just another ordinary, everyday apocalypse. If past experience is any guide, the world's reaction to the [floods](#) in Spain last October will be similar to that of motorway drivers at a crash scene: slow down, [take in](#) the horror, [outwardly](#) express sympathy, inwardly give thanks that [fate](#) picked someone else — and foot on the accelerator. That is the [pattern](#) in our climate-disrupted era when extreme-weather catastrophes have become so commonplace that they risk being normalised. Instead of [outrage](#) and determination to reduce the dangers, there is an insidious sense of complacency: these things happen. Someone else is responsible. Somebody else will [fix](#) it. Nothing could be further from the truth. The unnatural disaster in Spain — Europe's deadliest flash [floods](#) in at least half a century — is evidence of two undeniable truths: the human-caused climate crisis is just starting [to pick up](#) ferocity, and we need to quickly kill the fossil fuel industry before it kills us. That should be the primary message because [halting](#) the combustion of gas, oil, [coal](#) and trees is the only way to stabilise the climate. For this to happen, we must fight the tendency to normalise scenes of disaster. Cars [skittled](#) like [bowling pins](#) in urban streets, cars [bobbing](#) in rivers of [mud](#), cars turning into death traps. The images from Valencia and other regions of Spain are both shocking and familiar. In Italy last month, vehicles were [swept away](#) as roads turned to rivers. Before that, it was the turn of France, and in September, central Europe, where twenty-four died in [floods](#) in Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. There have also been [freakish downpours](#) in England. Of course, there have always been [floods](#), while local factors — atmospheric, geographic, economic and political — contribute to the impact, but it is the global physics of a fossil fuel-destabilised world that is [loading the dice](#) towards disaster. The warmer the atmosphere gets, the more [moisture](#) it can hold. That means longer [droughts](#) and more intense [downpours](#). In Spain, a year's

worth of rain was [dumped](#) in less than half a day. “Events of this type, which used to occur many decades apart, are now becoming more frequent and their destructive capacity is greater,” said Dr. Ernesto Rodríguez Camino, a senior state meteorologist and member of the Spanish Meteorological Association. Nobody can say they were not [warned](#). Thirty-two years have passed since governments agreed [to tackle](#) climate concerns at the first Rio de Janeiro Earth [summit](#) and nine years since the Paris Agreement to limit global heating to 1.5C° above pre-industrial levels. Yet global temperatures continue to hit record highs and emissions are rising faster than the average for the past decade. In other words, the foot is still on the gas although the [pile-ups](#) are getting so close they are almost banal. Governments continue to focus on economic speed rather than climate safety. They have been slow to reduce the risks and prepare societies, but many, including the UK, have been quick [to lock up](#) those who scream warnings and who [hold up](#) traffic. The legal system is effectively [compelling](#) citizens to accept catastrophe. What else to call it? In recent years, apocalyptic images appear to have migrated from Hollywood disaster movies: [Commuters](#) swept off subway platforms or trapped in carriages as the waters rose up to their necks during the Zhengzhou metro line 5 flooding disaster in China, the glass wall being [ripped off](#) the side of a Vietnamese office tower during the super-typhoon Yagi, which also [snapped](#) giant wind turbines like [twigs](#) in Hainan, China. Each grotesque clip [deadens](#) the impact. We are living in a time of unwelcome climate superlatives: the hottest two years in the world’s recorded history, the deadliest fire in the US, the biggest fire in Europe, the biggest fire in Canada, the worst drought in the Amazon rainforest. The list goes on. This is just the start. As long as people [pump](#) gases into the atmosphere, such records will be broken with increasing frequency until “worst ever” becomes our [default](#) expectation. But we should not let our [baselines shift](#) so easily. These are not isolated cases. They are part of a disturbing [pattern](#) that has been predicted by scientists and the [UN](#). The cause is clear and so is the remedy. The scientists at World Weather Attribution have shown on a case-by-case basis how much more intense and likely storms, [droughts](#), [floods](#) and fires have become as a result of human-caused climate disruption. This includes the late summer flooding in the Sudan, Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon that killed more than two

thousand people and displaced millions, the torrents that left at least 244 dead in Nepal from 26-28 September, the [floods](#) in the south of Brazil that took more than 169 lives earlier in the year, as well as the devastating hurricanes — particularly Helene and Milton — in the US that killed 360 people and caused more than [\\$100bn](#)40 of damage. In every case, the poor and elderly are most vulnerable. In Spain too, many of the bodies that filled the mobile morgues are of those of old people unable to escape first floor homes and delivery drivers caught in the torrents that [deluged](#) the streets. That all of this is already happening with just 1.3C° of global heating should be an urgent warning to [slash](#) emissions, said the authors of these studies. The [UN](#) seems to be [running out](#) of vocabulary to describe how serious the danger is. [UN](#) secretary-general António Guterres has declared “code red for humanity.” [UN](#) executive climate secretary Simon Stiell has [warned](#) “we have two years to save the world.” And last week the head of the [UN](#) environment programme, Inger Andersen, insisted “It’s climate [crunch time for real](#).” The scenes in Spain and elsewhere should be a [jolt](#) to the global consciousness. After all, the original meaning of apocalypse is revelation — [lifting the cover off](#), laying [things bare](#) But for that to happen, we need to truly [take in](#) and respond to the horror of what the world is going through, and stop pretending we can [carry on](#) as usual. **Published in The Guardian on 2 November**

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# Glossary

- **shift** = cambiare
- **outrage** = rabbia
- **mud** = fango
- **freakish** = strani
- **downpours** = acquazzoni, piogge torrenziali
- **pile-ups** = incidenti, tamponamenti
- **pump** = pompare
- **baselines** = punti di riferimento
- **\$100bn** = 100 miliardi di dollari
- **running out** = finire
- **take in** = assimilare, comprendere
- **fate** = destino
- **bowling pins** = birilli da bowling
- **bobbing** = oscillare
- **droughts** = siccità
- **Commuters** = pendolari
- **snapped** = rompere
- **lifting the cover off** = togliere il coperchio
- **pattern** = modello
- **halting** = fermare
- **to tackle** = affrontare
- **slash** = ridurre
- **floods** = inondazioni
- **loading the dice** = truccare i dadi
- **summit** = vertice
- **to lock up** = imprigionare
- **deadens** = smorzare
- **for real** = sul serio
- **things bare** = mettere a nudo, rivelare
- **Move on** = andare oltre
- **coal** = carbone
- **skittled** = urtare come birilli
- **dumped** = scaricare

- **hold up** = fermare
- **compelling** = costringere
- **carry on** = continuar
- **fix** = risolvere
- **ripped off** = strappare
- **UN** = ONU (United Nations)
- **deluged** = inondare
- **outwardly** = esternamente
- **default** = predefinito
- **jolt** = scossa
- **to pick up** = acquistare
- **swept away** = spazzare via
- **moisture** = umidità
- **warned** = avvisare
- **twigs** = rametti
- **crunch time** = momento decisivo