

KERALA DISASTER 2018

In late July 2018, severe [flooding](#) affected the [Indian](#) state of [Kerala](#) due to unusually high rainfall during the [monsoon season](#). It was the worst flooding in [Kerala](#) in nearly a century. Over 373 people died within a fortnight, while at least 280,67 people were evacuated, mainly from [Chengannur](#), [Pandanad](#), [Aranmula](#), [Aluva](#), [Chalaky](#), [Kuttanad](#) and [Pandalam](#). All 14 [districts](#) of the state were placed on high alert. According to the Kerala government, one-sixth of the total population of [Kerala](#) had been directly affected by the floods and related incidents.

Thirty-five out of the [forty-two dams within the state](#) were opened for the first time in history. All five overflow gates of the [Idukki Dam](#) were opened at the same time, for the first time in 26 years. Heavy rains in [Wayanad](#) and [Idukki](#) have caused severe landslides and have left the hilly districts isolated. The situation was regularly monitored by the [Prime Minister](#) and the [National Crisis Management Committee](#) coordinated the rescue and relief operations.

There was a controversy following the [Ministry of External Affairs'](#) refusal to allow the Kerala Government to accept help from the Government of the [UAE](#). The MEA position is that as per the existing foreign policy, assistance cannot be sought from foreign governments, but that [NGOs](#) and [PIOs](#) world wide may donate. Kerala Chief Minister [Pinarayi Vijayan](#) argued that the existing policy did not require India to reject aid from a foreign government

Causes

Kerala received heavy [monsoon](#) rainfall on the mid evening of August 8 resulting in [dams](#) filling to capacity; in the first 24 hours of rainfall the state received 310 mm (12 in) of rain. Almost all dams have been opened since the water level has risen close to overflow level due to heavy rainfall, flooding local low-lying areas. For the first time in the state's history, 35 of its 42 dams have been opened.

Most of the regions affected by this monsoon were classified as ecologically-sensitive zones (ESZs) by the the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, the [Gadgil Committee](#). Most of the recommendations and directions by the committee was either neglected or rejected. Chairman of the committee [Madhav Gadgil](#) accused the state government and its irresponsible

environmental policy for the recent landslides and floods. He called it a "man-made calamity".

The state government of Kerala argued in the [Supreme Court](#) that the sudden release of water from the [Mullaperiyar Dam](#) by the [Tamil Nadu government](#) was one of the reasons for the devastating flood in Kerala.