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Army helps relocate thousands in Juárez

Louie Gilot / El Paso Times

Some Juárez neighborhoods were evacuated on Tuesday as residents sought safety from rushing floodwaters and the overflowing Rio Grande.

Streets were turned into torrents of water while the Mexican army and civil protection authorities evacuated at least 1,500 families from areas threatened by at least two dikes that had reached capacity, officials said.

The powerful storm surge filled the Rio Grande levee to its brim, menacing the Anapra area situated across from West El Paso.

Juárez Mayor Hector Murguía Lardizabal declared the city in a state of emergency, the Associated Press reported. Fearing that the Rio Grande would overflow, he ordered personnel to evacuate city offices.

There were no known deaths. About a month ago, a 45-minute flash flood killed three women and one boy and destroyed countless houses.

At least two dikes at the foot of the mountains in West Juárez had reached their capacity by early Tuesday afternoon even as the rain continued to fall, said Oscar Nieto, Juárez city environmental and civil protection director.

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On Monday night, hundreds of Juarenses who live near the dikes were evacuated when the heavy rains started and have been staying at gymnasiums. City and state officials and Mexican soldiers pumped water from the dikes to try to keep the water levels down.

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