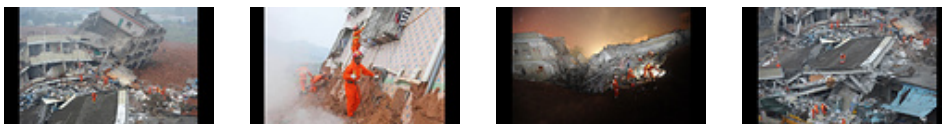


## FINANCIAL TIMES

December 21, 2015 8:31 am

# Shenzhen landslide caused by mountain of manmade waste

Ben Bland, South China correspondent

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More than 90 people are missing after a landslide inundated an industrial zone in the prosperous southern city of Shenzhen on Sunday, the latest incident to raise questions about safety standards in China.

Factories, offices, dormitories and other low-rise buildings were buried or damaged by the mudflow, according to Xinhua, China's state news agency. Hundreds of rescuers were scouring the site on Monday to clear the debris and look for survivors, although no deaths have yet been reported.

Although formal investigations have only just begun, the ministry for land and resources said that the debris originated from “a steep, man-made mountain of dirt, cement chunks and other construction waste”.

It said on its official Weibo account that the “huge amount” of waste piled on to the heap caused instability, which sparked its collapse and prompted the landslide.

Just a fishing village until China started to open up in the late 1970s, Shenzhen has grown to become one of the country’s wealthiest cities, with a population of more than 10m and thriving manufacturing and technology industries.

But, just as elsewhere in China, there are concerns that breakneck expansion has come at the cost of lax regulation and low-quality development.

Human error and lack of oversight have been blamed for contributing to other deadly disasters in China this year including a chemical explosion that devastated the port city of Tianjin in August, a ferry that sank on the Yangtze river in June and a stampede at New Year’s celebrations in Shanghai.

On Monday, Chinese state media published photographs of the Shenzhen incident site that showed multi-story buildings knocked over by an expansive sea of mud, as well as vehicles that had been swept away.

He Weiming, a local rubbish collector, told Xinhua that he left his home in Shenzhen, just over the border from Hong Kong, on Sunday morning and that when he returned just before midday “our house had already been buried by mud. It’s a 4-metre-high shed made of iron sheets, and we can’t even see the roof of it.”

Local villagers told the Beijing News, another state-owned media outlet, that the man-made trash heap was originally a quarry that had been abandoned until recently.

It reported that the abandoned quarry was turned into a temporary landfill for construction waste in February 2014 and that its licence expired in February 2015.

*Additional reporting by Luna Lin in Beijing and Jackie Cai in Shanghai*

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