

Philippines orders evacuation near powerful volcano

September 16 2014



Image taken on May 7, 2013 shows mount Mayon spewing a thick column of ash

Philippines authorities on Tuesday ordered people living close to a powerful volcano to evacuate, warning a dangerous eruption may occur within weeks.

Magma has reached the crater of Mayon volcano, in a coastal and farming area 330 kilometres (200 miles) southeast of Manila, according

to the director of the state volcanology agency, Renato Solidum.

"A hazardous [eruption](#) is possible within weeks," Solidum told AFP in a [text message](#).

Residents within the volcano's six-kilometre (3.7-mile) radius, already designated as a "permanent danger zone," will be forcibly evacuated immediately, regional civil defence director Bernardo Alejandro told AFP.

The volcanology agency raised the danger alert for Mayon to three, on a five-level scale. Level three means there is "relatively high unrest", and five means an eruption is occurring.

Local officials were meeting on Tuesday to discuss their response to a possible eruption, Alejandro said in a text message.

It was not immediately clear how many people lived within the [danger zone](#), but a local official told a televised press conference that 120 people had already been evacuated.

Mayon and its surroundings are also a popular tourist destination.

Mayon, one of the Philippines' most active volcanoes, last erupted in May 2013 when it spewed a giant ash cloud and a hail of rocks, killing four foreign tourists and their local tour guide.

The 2,460-metre (8,070-foot) Mayon is famed for its near-perfect cone but has a long history of deadly eruptions.

In 1814, more than 1,200 people were killed when lava flows buried the town of Cagsawa.

An explosion in August 2006 did not cause direct deaths, but the following December a passing typhoon unleashed an avalanche of volcanic mud from Mayon's slopes that killed 1,000 people.

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