

# At least 11 dead as Typhoon Lionrock floods northern Japan

August 31 2016, by Mari Yamaguchi

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Driftwood scatters near residential houses along a river in Iwaizumi town, Iwate prefecture, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016, after Typhoon Lionrock slammed into northern Japan on Tuesday evening. (Kyodo News via AP)

At least 11 people were found dead in Japan on Wednesday, most of them elderly residents at a nursing home, as heavy overnight rain from Typhoon Lionrock left towns flooded across the country's north.

Police discovered nine bodies in the town of Iwaizumi while checking another facility in the flooded neighborhood, said Takehiro Hayashijiri, an official at the Iwate prefecture disaster management division.

The identity of the victims and other details, including the whereabouts of their caretakers, were not known, Hayashijiri said. Japanese public broadcaster NHK said the home was for people with dementia.

Authorities have found two more bodies—one in the same town and the second in another town of Kuji—in Iwate prefecture, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency.

Footage on Japan's national broadcaster NHK showed the nursing home partially buried in mud, surrounded by debris apparently washed down in the swollen river. A car by the home was turned upside down.

At another nursing home, a rescue helicopter perched atop a flat roof of the facility, airlifting residents, each wrapped in a blanket and carried by their helpers.

"We're making a government-wide effort to assess the extent of damage," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters.



An aerial view shows a flooded area of Kuji city, Iwate prefecture, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016, after Typhoon Lionrock slammed into northern Japan on Tuesday evening. (Kyodo News via AP)

The government sent the Self-Defense Force, Japan's military, to help in the rescue and cleanup effort.

Further north, on the island of Hokkaido, at least two rivers broke through their banks.

The embankments gave way early Wednesday morning, NHK said, quoting Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Tourism. The disaster management agency said at least one person went missing while driving or riding in a car that went down with a bridge torn away by the flood.

Authorities in the town of Minamifurano reported hundreds of people

trapped in houses and shelters by flooding from the Sorachi river, the agency said. Hundreds of other people were also trapped in buildings and isolated in several towns in Iwate.



A part of Route 10 is damaged by floodwaters in Miyako city, Iwate prefecture, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016, after Typhoon Lionrock slammed into northern Japan on Tuesday evening. (Kyodo News via AP)

Typhoon Lionrock made landfall Tuesday evening near the city of Ofunato, 500 kilometers (310 miles) northeast of Tokyo on the Pacific coast and crossed the main island of Honshu before heading out to the Sea of Japan.

It was the first time a typhoon has made landfall in the northern region since 1951, when the Japan Meteorological Agency started keeping records.

The scene of large parts of northern Japan covered with muddy water was a shocking reminder of the major tsunami that struck the same region five years ago.

Iwate prefecture, the hardest-hit by the typhoon, is one of the areas still rebuilding from the March 2011 tsunami and earthquake, which left more than 18,000 people dead along Japan's northeastern coast.



Floodwaters from the Sorachi river wash away a building after embankments of the river were broken in Minami-furano, the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016. At least two rivers swollen by Typhoon Lionrock broke through embankments, flooding the areas. (Daisuke Suzuki/Kyodo News via AP)



A flooded nursing home, center left, is seen in Iwaizumi town, Iwate prefecture, northern Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016, after Typhoon Lionrock dumped heavy rains. Nine bodies were found Wednesday at the nursing home, police said. (Kyodo News via AP)



An aerial view shows a nursing home, center left, at a flooded area in Iwaizumi town, Iwate prefecture, northern Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016, after Typhoon Lionrock dumped heavy rains. Nine bodies were found Wednesday at the nursing home, police said. (Kyodo News via AP)



Workers repair a flood damaged bridge over the Sorachi river in Minami-furano, the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016. Typhoon Lionrock dumped heavy rains on the areas in northern Japan. (Daisuke Suzuki/Kyodo News via AP)





A residential house is damaged by driftwood in Kuji city, Iwate prefecture, northern Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016. Typhoon Lionrock hit the northern Japan, dumping heavy rains. (Shinji Kaga/Kyodo News via AP)



A road is flooded in Minami-furano, the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016. Typhoon Lionrock hit the northern Japan, dumping heavy rains. (Daisuke Suzuki/Kyodo News via AP)



An aerial view shows a flooded area of Kuji city, Iwate prefecture, Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2016, after Typhoon Lionrock slammed into northern Japan on Tuesday evening. (Kyodo News via AP)



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