

Typhoon death toll rises in Macau

August 25 2017



Electricity and water were cut off for parts of Macau when Typhoon Hato swept through, with queues forming for drinking water more than 24 hours after the storm passed

At least nine people are now known to have died in Macau when a huge typhoon swept through the gambling hub, plunging casinos into darkness and sparking destructive floods.

Around 48 hours after Severe Typhoon Hato smashed into southern China, worst-hit Macau was still picking up the pieces Friday, with the

enclave's government facing recriminations over its lack of preparation.

"It's been absolutely devastating for Macau," Andrew Scott, [chief executive officer](#) of O MEDIA, a media company in the city, told AFP.

"There is a real air of despondency. Each addition to the death toll is absolutely demoralising to the citizens of Macau," Scott said.

The official tally in the city hit nine on Friday after a man's body was pulled from a car park.

A further eight people are known to have died in parts of mainland southwestern China.

On Thursday evening, as residents of the former Portuguese colony queued for drinking water, Macau's leader Fernando Chui and other government ministers bowed their heads for a minute's silence.

"These two days, we have faced an extremely difficult test together. Hato is the strongest typhoon in 53 years and has brought tremendous damage to Macau," Chui told reporters.



The government of Macau is facing criticism for being unprepared for Typhoon Hato, which left at least nine people dead in the city

"In facing this disaster, we admit we have not done enough, there is space for improvement. Here I represent the Macau government in expressing our apologies to the residents," he said, adding that the city's meteorological bureau chief had resigned.

Casinos, which brought in more than \$28 billion in 2016—over half of Macau's GDP—were among the casualties of the storm, and reporters who got inside the Wynn Macau found switched off slot machines and no air conditioning.

Other casinos and resort facilities in the city were either shut or running at limited capacity.

"It will probably take at least a week to normalise again and for visitors to feel comfortable about coming again," gaming analyst Ben Lee told AFP Friday.

"This is the first major [typhoon](#) for decades and some of the casinos were unprepared for the severity. Some did not have sufficient generator backup," Lee of IGamiX consultancy said.

In Hong Kong, Hato—whose name is Japanese for "pigeon"—sparked the most severe Typhoon 10 warning, only the third time a storm of this power has pounded the financial hub in the past 20 years.

Although 120 people were hurt, there were no fatalities in the city, where careful planning and long experience with extreme weather is credited with limiting the devastation.

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Observatory was warning of another tropical cyclone heading towards the area and due to make landfall some time on Sunday.

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