

Philippine volcano rumbles back to life, thousands evacuated

January 14 2018

The Philippines' most active volcano rumbled back to life Sunday with lava rising to its crater in a gentle eruption that has prompted authorities to evacuate thousands of villagers.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology warned a "hazardous [eruption](#)" of Mount Mayon, located in Albay province in the northeastern Philippines, is possible within weeks or even days.

Renato Solidum, who heads the volcanology institute, said three steam-explosions at the [volcano](#) since Saturday have spewed ash into nearby villages and may have breached solidified [lava](#) at the crater and caused lava to start to flow out of the 2,460-meter (8,070-foot) volcano.

"Lava has flowed out of the volcano's [crater](#) already but it's just starting. It's a non-explosive eruption," Solidum told The Associated Press. "We have to verify tomorrow if it will flow continuously."

Disaster-response officials said nearly 1,000 families have been moved to emergency shelters, including some from a permanent [danger zone](#) around Mayon, since the volcano started spewing steam and ash on Saturday.

A popular tourist attraction because of its near-perfect cone, Mayon lies in coconut-producing Albay province, about 340 kilometers (210 miles) southeast of Manila.

The volcano has erupted about 50 times in the last 500 years, sometimes violently, endangering thousands of poor villagers who insist on living or farming in the danger zone.

Villagers living near the volcano, which last erupted four years ago, have erected huge white crosses at the entrance of their neighborhoods, hoping they will protect them from harm.

On May 7, 2013, the volcano suddenly spewed ash, killing five climbers, including three Germans, who had ventured near the summit despite warnings of possible danger.

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