

Hundreds flee lowlands as Cyclone Sarai sweeps past Fiji

December 27 2019



Damage is pictured around Tavua on the main Fijian island of Viti Levu after Cyclone Winston struck in 2016, killing 44 people

Tropical Cyclone Sarai barrelled off the coast of Fiji early Saturday, forcing hundreds of residents to move to higher ground ahead of

possible flooding.

The Category Two storm passed off the southwest of the main island of Viti Levu with forecast average winds of 95 kilometres per hour (60 miles per hour) and gusts of 130 kph at the centre of the storm.

The Fiji Meteorological Service warned of "damaging gale force winds" and heavy rain with coastal flooding expected in some areas as the cyclone intensified late Friday.

Around 360 people went to 15 evacuation centres across the country, the National Disaster Management Office said, as flash flood warnings were put in place.

"As we speak, more evacuation centres are expected to be activated as people living in low lying and coastal areas have already started experiencing damaging winds and heavy rain," said agency director Vasiti Soko.

Meanwhile, the plans of thousands of tourists who flock to the South Pacific island nation over the Christmas-New Year holiday period were upended as flights were cancelled or delayed.

Many day cruises around the islands have been called off while Fiji Airways has cancelled several inter-island flights, and flights to Australia and New Zealand.

Flights to the United States have been brought forward several hours to avoid the advancing [cyclone](#).

In February 2016, 44 people were killed when Cyclone Winston destroyed tens of thousands of homes and caused an estimated US\$1 billion in damage when it hit Fiji.

© 2019 AFP

Citation: Hundreds flee lowlands as Cyclone Sarai sweeps past Fiji (2019, December 27)

retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2019-12-hundreds-lowlands-cyclone-sarai-fiji.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.