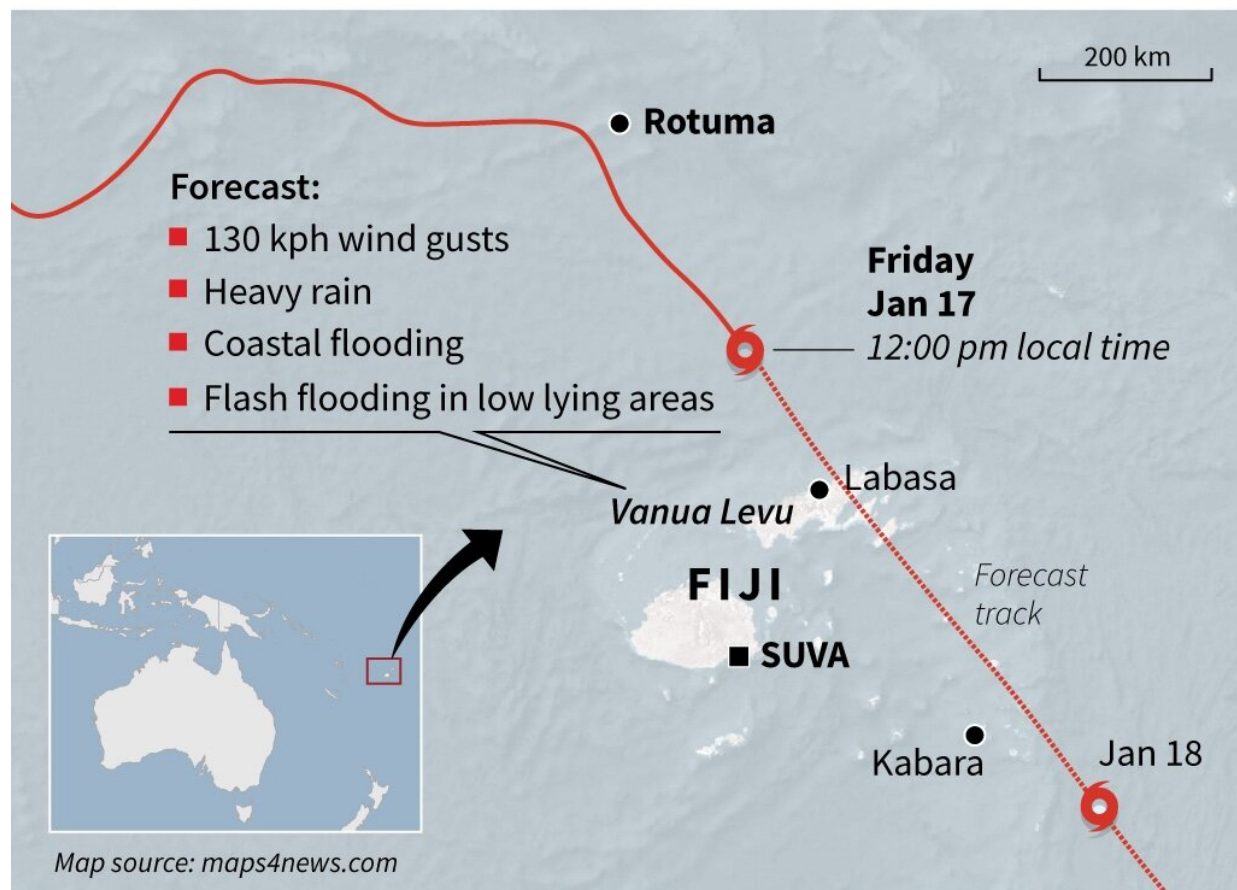


Fiji cyclone leaves two missing, 119 in emergency shelter

January 17 2020

Fiji cyclone

Tropical Cyclone Tino approaching with "destructive force winds"



Source: Fiji Met Service

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Map showing Fiji and the path of Tropical Cyclone Tino

A father and daughter were swept away in a swollen stream as Tropical Cyclone Tino caused widespread flooding in Fiji, forcing more than 100 people to take refuge in evacuation centres.

It is the second cyclone to hit the Pacific island nation in three weeks and the Meteorological Service has warned of "destructive force winds" with gusts up to 130 kilometres per hour (80 mph) and floods caused by heavy rain.

Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama on Friday told Fijians to "stay safe, remain away from floodwaters" as police searched for a schoolteacher and his daughter, believed to be aged nine or 10.

The pair were attempting to swim across a flooded river when they were caught in the strong currents.

The incident happened on Thursday before the storm developed into a tropical cyclone, but a police spokesman linked the tragedy to "heavy rain brought about by the current weather system (which) raised the river level".

On Fiji's outer islands, as locals were evacuated from their homes, many tourists fled beach resorts and made their way to the capital Suva before regional flights and inter-island ferry services were suspended.

Initial reports said damage was not extensive, but by Friday evening 119 people were housed in temporary shelters with National Disaster Management Office director Vaisiti Soko appealing for people to use the refuge serve and not take risks.

"Please make the move as soon as you see the water begins to rise so that

you and your family are safe," she said.

'Scary experience'

Nischal Prasad, who lost his home in northern Vanua Levu when Cyclone Sarai struck just after Christmas, told AFP he had no choice but to seek shelter.

"Sarai destroyed my house and almost left my family homeless. My daughters had to hide under their bed from the strong winds. It was a scary experience," he said.

"I haven't fully rebuilt my house yet and another cyclone is coming our way. I am very worried about my house, but I cannot stay here when the cyclone hits."

Russian tourist Inna Kostromina, 35, said she had sought safety in Suva after being told her island resort was in the path of the cyclone.

"We didn't want to get stuck in there and with the authorities warning of coastal flooding, anything can happen. So we decided to move to Suva for now. I think we will be much safer here."

While the Pacific [islands](#) are [popular tourist destinations](#) during the southern-hemisphere summer, it is also [cyclone](#) season.

Tropical Cyclone Sarai left two people dead and more than 2,500 needing [emergency shelter](#) as it damaged houses, crops and trees and cut electricity supplies.

On its present track, Tino would hit Tongatapu, the [main island](#) of neighbouring Tonga, on the weekend.

Two years ago, Tongatapu was hit by Cyclone Gina, with two people killed and nearly 200 houses destroyed.

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