

# Philippine volcano trembles more, spews lava half-mile high

January 14 2020, by Joeal Calupitan and Jim Gomez

---



Clouds of volcanic ash rise up from damaged trees in Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing lava half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

A volcano near the Philippine capital spewed lava into the sky and trembled constantly Tuesday, possibly portending a bigger and more dangerous eruption, as tens of thousands of people fled villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash.

Government work was suspended and schools were closed in a number of towns and cities, including Manila, because of health risks from the ash. Hundreds of flights were canceled or delayed, affecting tens of thousands of passengers.

The restiveness of the Taal volcano and several new fissures in the ground nearby likely mean magma is rising and may lead to further eruptive activity, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

The volcano was spurting fountains of red-hot lava 800 meters (half a mile) into the sky, and the massive column of ash and volcanic debris at times lit up with streaks of lightning.

The alert level since the eruption began Sunday has been 4, indicating a hazardous eruption is possible in hours to days. Level 5, the highest, means such an eruption is underway.

More than 350 volcanic earthquakes have been recorded near Taal since Sunday, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in New York.

The Philippine institute said about 50 volcanic earthquakes were detected over eight hours Tuesday, indicating rising magma. It also warned that heavy and prolonged ash fall was possible in nearby villages.



The number of a house is covered in volcanic ash in Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing ash half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

"The speed in the rise of magma is important (in determining) when the volcano will have a strong eruption and if it will slow down and freeze," said Renato Solidum, who heads the institute. "As of now, we don't see activities slowing down and the earthquakes still continue."

More than 38,000 people have been relocated so far to over 200 evacuation centers, Dujarric said. He said U.N. teams are visiting centers and supporting authorities, who have asked for help getting face masks.

The picturesque volcano in the middle of a lake in Batangas province south of Manila rumbled to life Sunday in a powerful explosion that blasted a 15-kilometer (9-mile) column of ash, steam and rock into the sky. Clouds of volcanic ash blowing over Manila, 65 kilometers (40 miles) to the north, closed the country's main airport Sunday and part of Monday until the ash fall eased.



People watch from Tagaytay, Cavite province, south of Manila, as Taal Volcano continues to spew ash on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Thousands of people fled the area through heavy ash as experts warned that the eruption could get worse and plans were being made to evacuate more.(AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

More than 500 international and domestic flights were canceled or

delayed due to the overnight airport closure, affecting about 80,000 passengers, airport manager Ed Monreal told The Associated Press.

"Hopefully the wind direction does not change. As long as the ash fall does not reach us, then we can be back to normalcy," Monreal said.

The disaster-response agency counted more than 40,000 evacuees in Batangas and nearby Cavite provinces who took shelter in nearly 200 evacuation centers. Officials expected the number to swell.

Solidum warned residents from returning to high-risk villages based on perceptions that the eruption was easing. He warned of pyroclastic flows, super-heated material from the volcano that can travel at great speed and incinerate anything in their path.

Solidum said it would take time for Taal's restiveness to ease and the lives of affected villagers to return to normal but added it's difficult to predict the volcano's behavior with certainty.



A roof collapses on a pedicab as volcanic ash covers a village at Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing ash half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

"We have to make sure that people understand and, of course, government, that this is not an activity that will just be a short while," Solidum told a news conference.

President Rodrigo Duterte visited hard-hit Batangas, which has been declared a calamity zone for faster disbursement of emergency funds. Accompanied by top disaster-response officials and Cabinet members,

he promised the national government would help with the cleanup and reconstruction of the devastated province once the eruption ends.

The government disaster-response agency has not provided details of damage but journalists saw dozens of houses ruined by heavy ash and frequent quakes in two Batangas areas.

At least six people have been taken to a hospital in Tagaytay city in Cavite due to respiratory ailments caused by the ash, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said.



Residents carry freshly caught fish as they negotiate a road covered with volcanic ash at Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing ash half a mile high and trembling with

earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



A resident clears volcanic ash from his roof in Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing ash half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)





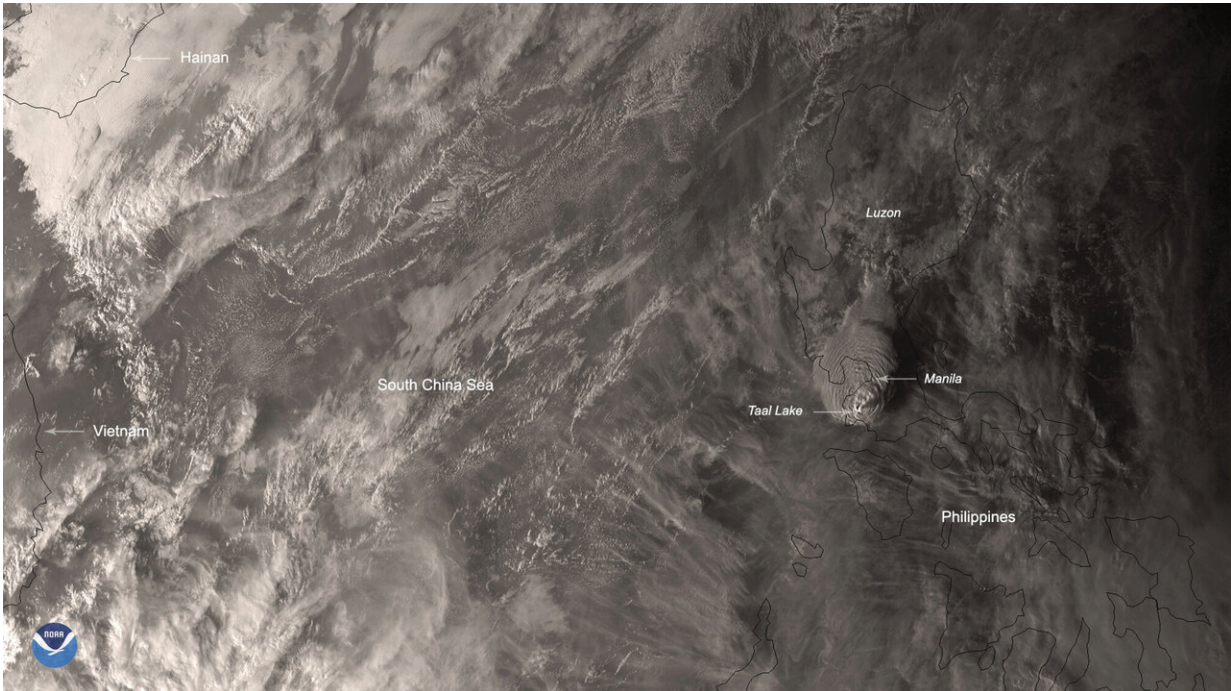
This Jan. 12, 2020, image made available by Himawari-8 satellite via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shows the eruption of Taal volcano, south of Manila, Philippines. The small volcano near the Philippine capital that draws tourists for its picturesque setting in a lake erupted with a massive plume of ash and steam Sunday, prompting the evacuation of tens of thousands of people and forcing Manila's international airport to shut down. (NOAA via AP)



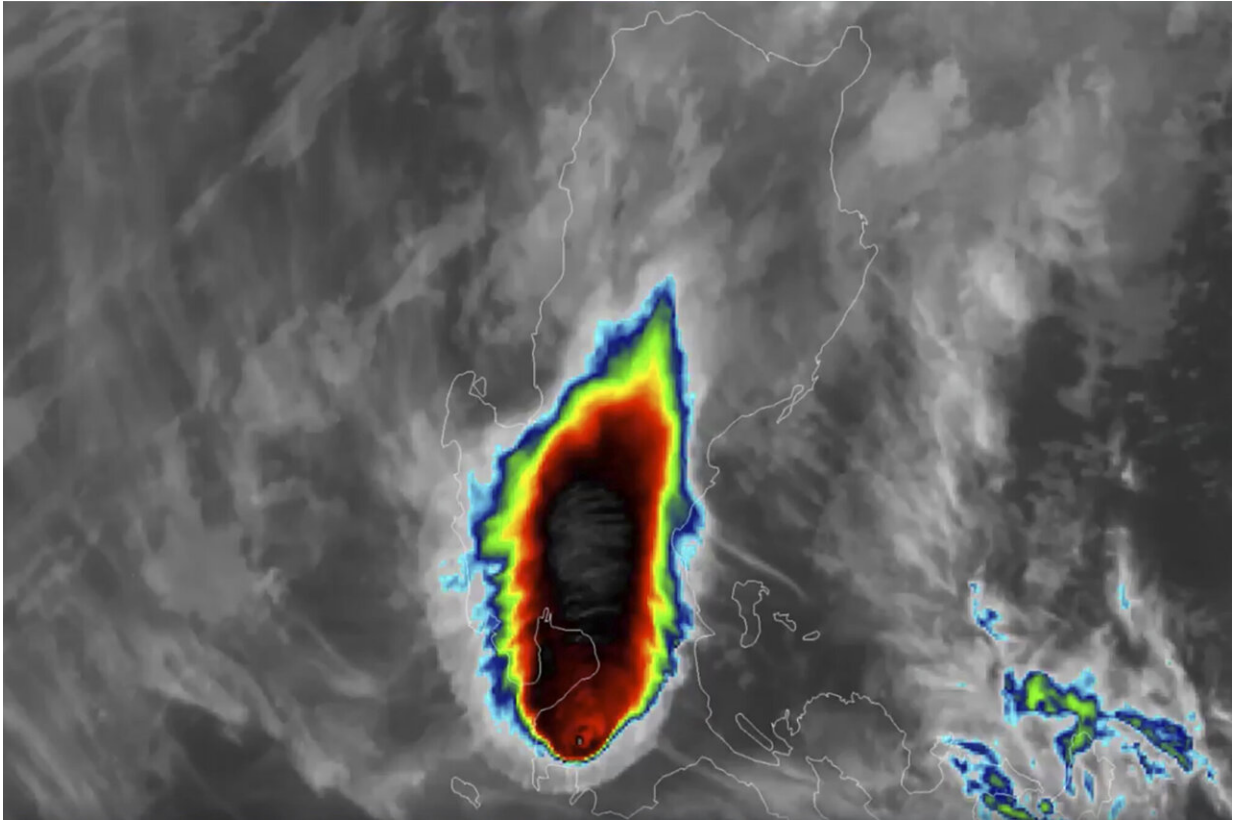
Men watch from Tagaytay, Cavite province, south of Manila, as Taal Volcano continues to spew ash on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Thousands of people fled the area through heavy ash as experts warned that the eruption could get worse and plans were being made to evacuate more.(AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



Volcanic ash covers the tops of cows rescued from a village in Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines as Taal volcano continues to spew ash on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. A volcano near the Philippine capital spewed lava into the sky and trembled constantly Tuesday possibly portending a bigger and more dangerous eruption, as tens of thousands of people fled villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



This Jan. 12, 2020, image made available by Himawari-8 satellite via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shows the eruption of Taal volcano, south of Manila, Philippines. The small volcano near the Philippine capital that draws tourists for its picturesque setting in a lake erupted with a massive plume of ash and steam Sunday, prompting the evacuation of tens of thousands of people and forcing Manila's international airport to shut down. The annotation of the locations are provided by the source. (NOAA via AP)



This Jan. 12, 2020, image made available by Himawari-8 IR satellite via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shows the eruption of Taal volcano, south of Manila, Philippines. The small volcano near the Philippine capital that draws tourists for its picturesque setting in a lake erupted with a massive plume of ash and steam Sunday, prompting the evacuation of tens of thousands of people and forcing Manila's international airport to shut down.(NOAA via AP)



A boat goes near fish pens at the lake of Taal Volcano as it continues to spew ash as seen from Tagaytay, Cavite province, south of Manila, Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Thousands of people fled the area through heavy ash as experts warned that the eruption could get worse and plans were being made to evacuate more.(AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



Residents clear their roofs covered with volcanic ash at Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing ash half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



A resident looks at a structure that was damaged from volcanic ash at Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing ash half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)





A resident walks past structures and trees damaged by volcanic ash at Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing ash half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



Clouds of volcanic ash rise up from damaged trees in Laurel, Batangas province, southern Philippines on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. Taal volcano is spewing lava half a mile high and trembling with earthquakes constantly as thousands of people flee villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

The eruption has not directly caused deaths or major damage. The death of a driver in a crash on an ash-covered road was linked to slippery conditions.

The small island where the 1,020-foot (311-meter) volcano lies has long been designated a "permanent danger zone," though fishing villages have long existed there. Those villages were all evacuated, though volcanology officials have called for a total evacuation of endangered communities

within a 14-kilometer (8.7-mile) radius of Taal.

Taal's last disastrous eruption, in 1965, killed hundreds of people. It is the second-most restive of about two dozen active volcanoes in the Philippines, which lies along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," where much of the world's seismic activity occurs.

A long-dormant volcano, Mount Pinatubo, blew its top north of Manila in 1991 in one of the biggest volcanic eruptions of the 20th century, killing hundreds of people.

© 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Philippine volcano trembles more, spews lava half-mile high (2020, January 14) retrieved 22 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-01-philippine-volcano-spews-lava-half-mile.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.