

Death toll passes 200 after Philippines typhoon

December 20 2021, by Ferdinandh Cabrera



More than 300,000 people fled their homes and beachfront resorts as Rai slammed into the country on Thursday as a super typhoon.

The death toll from the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines this year surpassed 200 on Monday, as desperate survivors pleaded for urgent

supplies of drinking water and food.

The Philippine Red Cross reported "complete carnage" in [coastal areas](#) after Typhoon Rai left homes, hospitals and schools "ripped to shreds".

The [storm](#) tore off roofs, uprooted trees, toppled concrete power poles, smashed wooden houses to pieces, wiped out crops and flooded villages—sparking comparisons to the damage caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

"Our situation is so desperate," said Ferry Asuncion, a street vendor in the hard-hit seaside city of Surigao, which was devastated by the storm.

Residents urgently needed "drinking water and food", he said.

At least 208 people were killed and 52 were missing in the latest disaster to hit the archipelago, with hundreds more injured after the storm ravaged southern and central regions, the national police said.

More than 380,000 people fled their homes and beachfront resorts as Rai slammed into the country on Thursday as a [super typhoon](#).

One of the hardest-hit islands was Bohol—known for its beaches, rolling "Chocolate Hills", and tiny tarsier primates—where at least 94 people have died, provincial Governor Arthur Yap said on his official Facebook page.



A destroyed house on the coast in Ubay town, Bohol province.

Many wooden houses in the coastal town of Ubay were flattened and small fishing boats destroyed on the island, where a state of calamity has been declared.

A senior official at the national disaster agency said he had not expected so many fatalities.

"I was proven wrong as it appears now coming from the reports," said Casiano Monilla, deputy administrator for operations.

Victims plea S.O.S

Rai hit the Philippines late in the typhoon season—most cyclones develop between July and October.

Scientists have long warned that typhoons are becoming more powerful and strengthening more rapidly as the world becomes warmer because of human-driven [climate change](#).

The Philippines—ranked among the most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change—is hit by an average of 20 storms every year, which typically wipe out harvests, homes and infrastructure in already impoverished areas.

Heavy toll after Typhoon Rai hits Philippines

Super typhoon struck Thursday with wind speeds of 195 km/h



The path of Typhoon Rai across the Philippines which struck Thursday December 17.

Typhoon Haiyan, called Yolanda in the Philippines, was at the time the strongest storm ever to have made landfall and left over 7,300 people dead or missing. The [death toll](#) from Rai is not expected to get anywhere close to that number.

The Philippines has an established disaster management system that provides early warnings to residents of an approaching storm and moves vulnerable communities into evacuation centres before it hits.

But the storm has dealt a savage blow to the country's tourism sector, which was already struggling to recover after Covid-19 restrictions decimated visitor numbers.

SOS was painted on a road in the popular tourist town of General Luna on Siargao island, where surfers and holidaymakers had flocked ahead of Christmas, as people struggled to find water and food.

"There's no water anymore, there's a water shortage, on day one there was already looting in our neighbourhood," Siargao resort owner Marja O'Donnell told CNN Philippines.

There has also been widespread destruction on Dinagat and Mindanao islands, which along with Siargao bore the brunt of the storm when it slammed into the country packing wind speeds of 195 kilometres (120 miles) per hour.

At least 14 people died on the Dinagat Islands, provincial information officer Jeffrey Crisostomo told broadcaster ABS-CBN.



Residents take stock next to their destroyed house in Carcar, Cebu province.

"Dinagat Islands has been levelled to the ground," he said.

Swathes of the affected areas have no communications, hampering efforts by disaster agencies to assess the full extent of the storm's damage.

Electricity has also been knocked out, affecting water-refilling stations and ATMs.

Thousands of military, police, coast guard and fire personnel have been deployed to hard-hit areas along with food, water and medical supplies,

while heavy machinery—like backhoes and front-end loaders—have been sent to clear roads blocked by fallen power poles and trees.

But some victims have expressed frustration at the government's response.

"No one showed up—I don't know where the politicians and (election) candidates are," said a visibly angry Levi Lisondra, an elderly resident in Surigao City, on the northern tip of Mindanao.

"We paid big taxes when we were working and now they can't help us."

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Citation: Death toll passes 200 after Philippines typhoon (2021, December 20) retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-12-death-toll-philippines-typhoon.html>

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