

Sorrow in Peru as mudslides destroy homes

March 17 2023, by Carlos MANDUJANO



The rainy season that started in January and could last until April, has left 50 dead and some 8,000 affected by damage countrywide, according to relief agencies.

One mudslide after another finally destroyed the house of Elvis Palomino in Chaclacayo, east of Peru's capital Lima, where others are stacking sandbags they hope will save them from a similar fate.

As [heavy rains](#) continue to drench the region, they fear the rising waters of the Rimac—Quechua for "talking river"—could also turn them into casualties of the natural disasters that have claimed several dozen lives this year.

"It took my entire [house](#), left me with nothing," said Palomino, a 58-year-old security guard with four children who lives in a middle-class suburb of brick houses.

He barely managed to contain his tears as he stood looking at the only two walls left of what used to be his [family home](#), destroyed by torrents of mud and stone, known locally as huaicos, that swept through Chaclacayo this week.

Three other homes nearby were also razed.

"It is not easy to accept this reality," Palomino told AFP. "I do not wish this on anyone. I don't have a bed, I don't have a radio, all my stuff is gone."

The clothing on his back was all he had left.

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Unusually intense this year, the downpours have seen rivers burst their banks and caused landslides in the Peruvian Andes.



Pervuvian authorities have set up a camp on dry ground with 15 tents to receive families evacuated from along the banks of the rising Rimac river.



Rivers of mud flooded the main highway linking Chaclacayo to the rest of the country, stranding cargo and passenger vehicles.

'Frightened' of the river

In Chaclacayo, some 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) east of Lima, rivers of mud flooded the main highway, stranding hundreds of vehicles with cargo and passengers.

Ray La Rosa, a neighbor of Palomino, said that for him, "the most worrying thing is that we are without water and electricity because of the huaicos two days in a row."

Nearby, 56-year-old Charo Matos was scooping water from her flooded

house with a bucket, saying she was now "frightened" of the rising Rimac.

Authorities have set up a camp on dry ground with 15 tents to receive families evacuated from the banks of the river, as the meteorological office warned moderate to intense rains would persist until Friday.

The downpours were triggered by cyclone Yaku, a type of extreme event experts say are associated with the weather phenomenon El Nino, which warms the south Pacific and pummels the coasts of Peru and Ecuador with heavy rains.

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