

Toll in Japan rains hit 3, some evacuation orders lifted

29 August 2019



Omachi in Saga prefecture was one of the hardest-hit towns

The death toll from heavy rains in Japan rose to three on Thursday, as authorities urged local authorities to stay on alert despite the lifting of some evacuation orders.

The third victim in the rains that prompted the weather agency to issue its highest level warning earlier this week was discovered in a flooded home in southwestern Saga prefecture, officials said.

"An autopsy determined that she had drowned," Saga police spokesman Hiroshi Dan told AFP of the 96-year-old woman.

"When rescuers went to the house yesterday, they didn't see her as the water was already nearly one-metre (3.3-foot) high."

Two other deaths were confirmed Wednesday in Saga and neighbouring Fukuoka prefecture. And officials said one person was in [critical condition](#) and another was missing in Saga.

Authorities meanwhile lifted evacuation orders that on Wednesday applied to 870,000 people.

By Thursday afternoon, 392,000 people were under orders to seek shelter, while another 884,000 were under lower-level evacuation advisories, according to the national disaster management agency.

The weather agency has also downgraded its warnings for the region from the highest "emergency warning" to the second-highest level, but warned residents must to remain alert for landslides and flooding.

The agency forecasts more heavy rains could hit northern Kyushu and other areas in the coming days, although floodwater has receded now in some areas.

Evacuation orders and advisories issued by [local authorities](#) are not mandatory, although officials urge residents to heed them.

In one of the hardest-hit towns, Omachi in Saga, nurses were arriving on boats to hospital that was cut off by floodwater, while authorities were battling an oil leak from a small local steelworks.

Japanese authorities regularly urge people to take [evacuation](#) orders seriously, particularly after disastrous [heavy rains](#) last summer in Japan's west killed more than 200 people.

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