

Death toll hits 72 as Tropical Storm Nalgae drenches Philippines

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Rescuers help residents evacuate in Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat on October 28, 2022 [Regional Maritime Unit 12, Sultan Kudarat Maritime Police/AFP]

Manila, October 29 (RHC)-- The Philippines has now recorded 72 deaths from Tropical Storm Nalgae, which has brought flash floods and landslides to provinces in the south of the country, the country's

disaster agency said. The tropical storm, which has maximum sustained winds of 95km (59 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 160kph (99.4 mph), made landfall in the eastern Catanduanes province early on Saturday.

Maguindanao province has been the hardest hit with 67 people reported dead so far, disaster agency spokesperson Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro told the DZMM radio station. Two people were also killed in Sultan Kudarat, another two in South Cotabato, and other casualties were spread across the Visayas region in central Philippines, he said. Another 33 have been injured and 14 people are missing, he added.

Storm Nalgae will bring heavy and at times torrential rains over the capital, Manila, and nearby provinces on Saturday as it cuts through the main Luzon island and heads to the South China Sea, the state weather agency said in its latest bulletin.

Barnaby Lo, reporting for Al Jazeera from Manila, said on Saturday that the capital had experienced around 10 hours of continuous rain and the precipitation was expected to continue through to Sunday. "These rains have triggered mudslides, landslides and flash floods. Now, in particular, in one village in the province of Maguindanao 67 people, at least 67 people have died in a flash flood. That's just in one village," he said.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration warned on Saturday that Nalgae (known locally as Paeng) will continue to cause flooding and rain-induced landslides as it crosses the country.

Search and rescue teams pulled bodies from the water and thick mud after Nalgae triggered flooding and landslides in the south of the country on Friday. "We are now gathering all rescue teams and will conduct a briefing before deployment," Nasrullah Imam, disaster agency official at Maguindanao province, said on Saturday. "It's no longer raining so this will help our search and operation."

An average of 20 tropical storms hit the Philippines annually. Scientists have warned that such storms, which also kill livestock and destroy key infrastructure, are becoming more powerful as the world gets warmer because of climate change.

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