

# *Half of Vanuatu Left Homeless After Devastating Cyclone*

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Port Vila, March 17 (HRC)-- A devastating cyclone in the South Pacific Island state of Vanuatu has left half the population homeless and more than 20 dead. A Category 5 storm, Cyclone Pam flattened buildings and washed away roads and bridges.

Cyclone Pam reportedly killed at least 24 people and displaced 3,300 others in Vanuatu as the devastating typhoon moves on towards New Zealand. The latest figures, announced by the United Nations on Monday, come as authorities plan to carry out aerial surveys by Australian and French aircraft on Tuesday in a bid to identify Vanuatu's worst-hit areas.

Speaking during a visit to Japan just as the storm hit, Vanuatu President Baldwin Lonsdale appealed for international aid. Lonsdale says climate change is "contributing to the disaster," with global warming fueling extreme weather and stronger cyclones.

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