

Hawaiian governor calls for moratorium on Lahaina land purchases

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Honolulu, August 17 (RHC)-- The death toll from the devastating Maui fires has reached 111 and continues to rise as crews search areas in and around Lahaina. About 1,000 people remain missing.

On Wednesday, authorities in Hawaii defended not activating emergency sirens during the wildfire. Maui emergency chief Herman Andaya told reporters: “The sirens, as I had mentioned earlier, are used primarily for tsunamis. And that’s the reason why many of them are found — almost all of them are found on the coastline. The public is trained to seek higher ground in the event that the siren is sounded. In fact, on the website of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, the following guideline is provided: If you are in a low-lying area near the coastline, evacuate to high grounds.”

Instead of using the sirens, emergency officials in Maui sent out warnings to people’s cellphones, but many did not receive the messages because power and cell service was already down.

Meanwhile, Hawaii’s Governor Josh Green has proposed a moratorium on land transactions in Lahaina. He said: “My intention from start to finish is to make sure that no one is victimized from a land grab.” Hawaiians have been warning about wealthy outsiders attempting to buy up land after the fire.

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