

Death toll from Super Typhoon Rai soars to 375 in Philippines

Dec. 20 (UPI) — Horrors continued to emerge over the weekend as the scope of the utter destruction left behind by Super Typhoon Rai in the Philippines came clearly into view.

The fierce storm, described as “one of the most powerful typhoons to ever hit the southern Philippines” by the chairman of the Philippine Red Cross, has left hundreds of people dead and has completely cut off some communities from the outside world.

As of Monday, the death toll in the Philippines had risen to at least 375 people, with another 56 people missing and over 500 injured, according to The Washington Post.

Government officials were having difficulty assessing the full scope of the damage due to the extensive loss of telecommunications in the affected provinces, Al Jazeera reported. Flooded roadways and extensive debris are adding more challenges to rescuers attempting to reach the hardest-hit areas.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) called Rai “a terrible surprise for the festive season” as it severely flooded cities and towns, tore homes and businesses to shreds and littered the ground with downed power lines, snapped trees and other debris.

“The full picture is only just starting to emerge, but it is clear there is widespread devastation. It is heartbreaking to see homes, Red Cross offices and even a hospital ripped apart. We hold grave fears for people in areas, including Siargao and other islands that still have no communication and contact with the outside world,” Alberto Bocanegra, IFRC Head of the Philippine Country Office, said in a statement.

The Philippine Coast Guard released aerial pictures on Friday of homes that were leveled and left unrecognizable by the fury of Rai.

Siargao Island sustained significant damage as the typhoon first roared ashore

Thursday afternoon, local time, with the equivalent strength of a Category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale (maximum sustained winds of at least 156 mph) in the Atlantic or East Pacific basins.

In total, Rai made eight landfalls as it weaved through the various islands that make up the south-central Philippines, according to the country's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

The islands of Mindanao and Nonoc also sustained significant devastation.

Source:

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