

Hawaii's Kilauea Volcano Destroys Hundreds of Homes, Including Big Island Mayor's House, Official Says

At a Glance

- An official said hundreds more homes were destroyed by Kilauea overnight on the Big Island.
- Lava flows have covered at least 8 square miles in the Puna district.
- More than a dozen residents who ignored evacuation orders have been arrested in the past week.

As lava from the Kilauea Volcano continues to reportedly destroy hundreds of homes in the Lower Puna area of Hawaii, the Big Island's mayor received news on Tuesday that his own home was not spared.

Hawaii County Mayor Harry Kim said a home he has owned in Vacationland since 1971 was among those destroyed by the lava, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

"Harry had a premonition this was going to happen," Hawaii County Civil Defense spokeswoman Janet Snyder told the Star-Advertiser. "Vacationland is almost totally destroyed."

(MORE: Blue Flames Shoot Out of Ground near Lava)

Snyder also said 117 homes have been lost since lava began flowing from fissures a month ago, but she expects that number to rise by the hundreds when additional mapping of impacted areas is performed. Thousands have been forced to evacuate, and for some, it has been weeks since they were forced out.

The lava has now covered an 8-square-mile swath of land, scientists told the Associated Press. An aerial survey of the scene Tuesday morning also confirmed Kapoho Bay had been completely filled with lava overnight.

Despite orders to leave their homes and threats that those who ignore the mandatory evacuations could face arrest, rescue crews airlifted three people out of an area where they'd become trapped by lava Sunday morning, Reuters reported. The lava continues to cut off roadways in the lower Puna area, threatening to strand anyone who stayed behind.

Authorities told the AP that 18 arrests have been made in the past week due to residents loitering in a disaster area. Those who had to be rescued were also cited for failing to leave a disaster area, the report added.

"I can no longer afford to put residents at risk," Hawaii County Mayor Harry Kim said during a press conference. "I can no longer afford to put DOCARE, police, fire, National Guard to go banging in the dark of a neighborhood they don't know to say, 'You must get out now.'"

Those who were forced to evacuate joined hundreds of evacuees at nearby shelters, some of whom have been away from their homes for weeks. Some have been allowed to return to their homes to gather belongings as conditions allow, but they're aware that every trip home could be the last time they see their houses.

"We evacuated the first day. We didn't think we're ever coming back after that," Leilani Estates resident Lori Wada told the Honolulu Civil Beat.

Some of those who sought shelter at the Pahoia Community Center have slept in tents every day for weeks, the report added.

"I don't want to talk about it," one man told the Civil Beat. "It's too painful."

(PHOTOS: Kilauea's Month-Long Eruption)

Over the weekend, a 400-year-old lake vanished within hours after lava entered it and boiled away all of its water.

Lava from nearby fissure 8 entered Green Lake Saturday, creating a massive plume of steam as it caused the body of water to fizzle away, the USGS reported. It seeped into the lake between roughly 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and had completely evaporated all of its water by 3 p.m.

Locally known as "Ka Wai a Pele," the centuries-old freshwater lake has been

described as one of the Big Island's most scenic and natural spots. It's the larger of the island's two freshwater lakes.

(MORE: Kalapana, Hawaii Burning: The History of Kilauea's Catastrophic Lava Flow)

Kilauea's volcanic haze is having far-reaching impacts. It has reached the American territory of Guam, located some 4,000 miles from the Big Island. Island officials warned residents and visitors to take precautions, as some could experience respiratory problems.

One person has been hurt by the lava since the eruptions began. Civil Defense Administrator Talmadge Magno told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser that a man sustained a "serious" injury on his leg two weeks ago when he was "lava-bombed" by splatter that hit him while he was sitting on the porch of a home near the Lanipuna Garden subdivision.

The incident reportedly shattered the victim's leg from his shin to his foot and he was taken to a hospital to be treated, ABC News reported.

Source: <https://weather.com/news/news/2018-06-05-hawaii-kilauea-volcano-eruptions-impacts>

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