

Typhoon leaves 12 dead, four missing in Philippines

A powerful typhoon has left 12 people dead and four missing in the Philippines as it moved toward the southern islands of Japan, the Office of Civil Defence said Tuesday.

Most of the victims drowned in the eastern provinces of Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte while others were buried in landslides or were electrocuted.

The missing included two air force pilots whose plane disappeared while conducting a search and rescue mission off the country's west coast, the civil defence office said.

Typhoon Mitag, packing maximum sustained winds of 75 km an hour and gusts of up to 90 km an hour, weakened after making landfall in the northern Philippines late Sunday.

It was moving northeast at 15 km an hour toward Okinawa, the weather bureau said.

The civil defence office said more than 201,000 people were still in evacuation centres in 18 eastern and northern provinces affected by Mitag's onslaught.

The typhoon destroyed crops worth more than \$2.53 million (109 million pesos) and damaged 3,180 houses, the office said.

Mitag also caused havoc in Taiwan as heavy downpours paralysed air and marine traffic in the south, and left at least three people missing in the northeast part of the island.

Two anglers were swept into the sea and another man drowned while catching eels in a river in Ilan county in northeast Taiwan.

While Mitag was already on the way out of the Philippines, a weather bureau warning said that two other storms were expected to bring more rain to the country.

Tropical storm Hagibis, which killed 13 people in the southern Philippines last week, re-entered Philippine waters and was threatening western provinces.

A tropical depression was also expected in three to four days.

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