

Philippine storm leaves 106 dead and missing

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MANILA, Philippines — Philippine officials say the number of dead and missing from Tropical Storm Ketsana has climbed to at least 106 people. The storm set off the worst flooding in the Philippine capital and nearby provinces in more than 42 years.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said Sunday that army troops, police and civilian volunteers rescued more than 5,000 people — many of them nervously clinging to each other on roofs and on top of passenger buses after the storm struck the previous day.

The newly reported deaths included 12 villagers who died in a landslide in northern Pampanga province and nine others in Bulacan province, most of whom died by drowning. Also, an army soldier and four militiamen drowned while trying to rescue villagers in southern Laguna province.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Rescuers plucked bodies from muddy floodwaters and scrambled to save drenched survivors on rooftops Sunday after a tropical storm tore through the northern Philippines and left 75 people dead or missing in the region's worst flooding in more than four decades.

The government declared a "state of calamity" in metropolitan Manila and 25 storm-hit provinces, allowing officials to utilize emergency funds for relief and rescue, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said. Army troops, police and civilian volunteers have rescued more than 5,100 people.

Tropical Storm Ketsana roared across the northern Philippines near Manila on Saturday, dumping more than a month's worth of rain in just 12 hours. The resulting landslides and flooding have left at least 52 people dead and 23 others missing, Teodoro said.

Military chief Gen. Victor Ibrado, accompanied by journalists, flew over several suburban Manila towns Sunday on board air force helicopters to witness the harrowing sight of drenched survivors still marooned on top of half-submerged passenger buses and rooftops. Some dangerously clung on high-voltage power lines while others plodded through waist-high flood waters, TV footage showed.

Authorities deployed rescue teams on boats to save survivors sighted during the aerial check.

Nearly 300,000 people were affected by storm, including some 47,000 people who were brought to about 100 schools, churches and other evacuation shelters, officials said.

In the city of Marikina near Manila, a rescuer gingerly lifted the mud-covered body of a child from a boat and carried away two other bodies found in a search of a flooded neighborhood.

Many residents lost all their belongings in the storm, but were thankful they were alive.

"We're back to zero," said Marikina resident Ronald Manlangit. Still he expressed relief that he managed to move all his children to the second floor of his house Saturday as floodwaters engulfed the ground floor.

Mud covered everything — cars, the road and vegetables in a public market near Manlangit's house.

Governor Joselito Mendoza of Bulacan province north of the capital, said it was tragic that "people drowned in their own houses" as the storm raged.

Distress calls and e-mails from thousands of residents in metropolitan Manila and their worried relatives flooded TV and radio stations overnight. Ketsana swamped entire towns, set off landslides and shut down Manila's airport for several hours.

"My son is sick and alone. He has no food and he may be waiting on the roof of his house. Please get somebody to save him," a weeping housewife, Mary Coloma, told radio DZBB.

The sun shone briefly in Manila on Sunday and showed the extent of devastation in many neighborhoods — destroyed houses, overturned vans and cars, and streets and highways covered in debris and mud.

The 16.7 inches (42.4 centimeters) of rain that swamped metropolitan Manila in just 12 hours on Saturday exceeded the 15.4-inch (39.2-

centimeter) average for all of September, chief government weather forecaster Nathaniel Cruz said, adding that the rainfall broke the previous record of 13.2 inches (33.4 centimeters) in a 24-hour period in June 1967.

Garbage-choked drains and waterways, along with high tide, compounded the problem, officials said.

Ketsana, which packed winds of 53 mph (85 kph) with gusts of up to 63 mph (100 kph), hit land early Saturday then roared across the main northern Luzon island toward the South China Sea.

Associated Press writer Oliver Teves contributed to this report.

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