TYPHOON ROARS INTO SOUTH CHINA; TENS OF THOUSANDS EVACUATED

News / Airports / Routes

A strong typhoon roared into southern China on Sunday, bringing powerful winds and heavy rain to the region after leaving one dead and 30 fishermen missing in the Philippines.

Nearly 200,000 people in southern China were evacuated before Typhoon Mujigae made landfall near the city of Zhanjiang in Guangdong province just after 2 p.m., according to the National Meteorological Center.

By 7:00 p.m., its center was located about 460 kilometers (285 miles) west of Hong Kong and moving steadily inland.

The center had already issued a red alert - China's highest level of weather preparedness - warning that as much as 280 millimeters (11 inches) of rain could fall in some places from Sunday morning to Monday morning.

As of Sunday evening, there were no reports of injuries or damage from the storm.

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Packing winds of 180 kilometers (112 miles) per hour at its center, Mujigae -- "rainbow" in Korean -- was moving northwest at about 20 kph (12 mph), the meteorological center said.

The typhoon lashed both Guangdong and the resort island province of Hainan, where thousands of Chinese have flocked during the weeklong National Day holiday that runs through Wednesday. It is expected to weaken as it heads further inland over the next two days.

Scores of flights in and out of Hainan's main airport in the provincial capital of Haikou have been canceled, and high-speed rail service between Haikou and the tourist center of Sanya was suspended Saturday and Sunday.

More than 60,000 fishing boats returned to port in the two provinces and more than 40,000 fishermen working on fish farms moved to shelters, according to the provincial government websites.

Meanwhile, upwards of 500 tourists were sheltering in hotels in Guangdong's Fangji island after attempts to evacuate them were disrupted by high winds, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Mujigae, the 22nd typhoon of the year, blew out of the northern Philippines early Saturday, causing floods and a few landslides and leaving 30 fishermen missing, said regional Office of Civil Defense spokesman Mike Sabado.

Nearly 200 fishermen had been reported missing at the height of the storm, mostly from the provinces of Pangasinan and La Union, but most sailed back home after taking shelter or were rescued at sea.

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