

Typhoon Haiyan death toll closer to 2,500, Philippine president says

By CNN Staff

November 12, 2013 -- Updated 1637 GMT (0037 HKT)



Philippine President: Death toll closer to 2,000

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- "We all live on one planet," says Aquino, calling for the world to act on climate change
- The typhoon overwhelmed two or three local governments, slowing the initial response
- In Tacloban, only 20 of 290 police were available to respond when disaster struck
- The previous estimate came from officials who were perhaps "too close" to events

(CNN) -- A well-publicized estimate that Typhoon Haiyan killed 10,000 people in the Philippines is "too much," and the death toll likely is closer to 2,000 or 2,500, President Benigno Aquino III told CNN's Christiane Amanpour on Tuesday.

[Read: Typhoon Haiyan leaves 1,774 dead, aid efforts mobilize](#)

"We're hoping to be able to contact something like 29 municipalities left wherein we still have to establish their numbers, especially for the missing, but so far 2,000, about 2,500, is the number we are working on as far as deaths are concerned," he said.

The monster storm left behind a catastrophic scene after it made landfall on six Philippine islands last Friday, leaving many without access to food and medical care. At least 800,000 people have been displaced, the United Nations said Tuesday.

Photos: Typhoon Haiyan
Haiyan's track
Philippine family's survival story

By Tuesday, Philippines officials said 1,774 bodies had been counted and 2,487 people were injured.

The previous estimate of 10,000 killed, Aquino said, came from local officials who perhaps were "too close" to the center of destruction to make an accurate guess.

[Read: Typhoon Haiyan crushed town 'like giant hand from the sky'](#)

The typhoon simply overwhelmed the ability of two or three local governments to do their jobs, which include taking care of the initial response, the President said. For example, in Tacloban, only 20 of 290 police were available when disaster struck; many were tending to their own families, he said.

The national government "had to replace a lot of the personnel with personnel from other regions to take care of government's vital functions," Aquino said.

The typhoon wreaked havoc on power lines and communications facilities, which meant government officials faced immense difficulties in identifying needs and dispatching relief supplies and equipment. But the situation has improved, he said. All of the national roads are reopened and most of the airports are nearly back to normal operating levels, he said.

Still, he added, the sheer number of people affected is daunting.

Aquino said the toll might have been higher had it not been for preemptive evacuations, the prepositioning of supplies and cooperation from businesses. "But, of course, nobody imagined the magnitude that this super typhoon brought on us," he said.

Aquino expressed gratitude for the aid that has been pouring in from around the world. "There are, at last count, over 22 countries have either pledged to us, actually given us aid," he said.

Though civil order has broken down in some areas, some 2,000 personnel have been deployed to restore it, he said.

"People were -- became -- desperate, and that's why we are trying to fast-track the situation where national government takes over these local government functions so that order is restored."

Responding to a question about the vulnerability of his country to climate change, Aquino said he had no doubt that climate change is occurring and the world must respond to it. "There should be no debate that this is happening," he said, citing heavy rains during what used to be dry months, periods of drought during what used to be wet months and the havoc that that has inflicted on farmers.

"We all live on one planet," the President said. "Either we come up with a solution that everybody adheres to and cooperates with, or let us be prepared to meet disasters."

Efforts are under way to better prepare the archipelago nation to endure future such assaults, such as planting mangroves in tidal areas as a defense against tsunamis, and investing in meteorology to better predict -- and prepare for -- such events.



After the immediate needs of the populace are met, the nation's focus will turn to rebuilding the tens of thousands of homes affected -- this time to standards better able to withstand typhoons, Aquino said.

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Typhoon Haiyan

[How it happened: Tracing Typhoon Haiyan's havoc](#)

November 12, 2013 -- Updated 1205 GMT (2005 HKT)

The unbearable stench of rotting flesh. The search for relatives under heaps of rubble. The desperate pleas for food and water.



[Emotional extremes for families of typhoon victims](#)

November 13, 2013 -- Updated 0129 GMT (0929 HKT)

People thousands of miles from the Philippines still felt their hearts stop and their bearings spin as Typhoon Haiyan slammed into the island nation.



[How to help Typhoon Haiyan survivors](#)

November 12, 2013 -- Updated 1718 GMT (0118 HKT)

The stories coming out of the Philippines are unimaginable. Rushing water and wind tearing children away from their parents' arms. A city of 200,000 in which no buildings appear to have survived intact.



[Typhoon creates health crisis](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 2316 GMT (0716 HKT)

The unprecedented natural disaster is a potential medical disaster for the Philippines, according to emergency crews on the ground.



[UN: Logistics are biggest challenge](#)

November 12, 2013 -- Updated 0219 GMT (1019 HKT)

Richard Quest speaks to a rep from the World Food Programme about the challenges faced in getting aid to the Philippines.



[Inmates threaten break out after Haiyan](#)

November 12, 2013 -- Updated 0022 GMT (0822 HKT)

Prison inmates threaten a mutiny if they aren't given food in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. Andrew Stevens reports.



[Hear typhoon slam into the Philippines](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 2359 GMT (0759 HKT)

CNN reporters capture sounds and images of Typhoon Haiyan's devastating trek through Tacloban, Philippines.



[Typhoon victim: This is worse than hell](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 2300 GMT (0700 HKT)

Officials worry the increasing number of decaying bodies will become a health hazard for survivors of Typhoon Haiyan.

[30 members of one family missing](#)

November 12, 2013 -- Updated 0735 GMT (1535 HKT)

Their faces stare from old photos, their voices silent since Super Typhoon Haiyan swept through Tacloban in the Philippines on Friday.

[Children among Haiyan victims](#)

November 12, 2013 -- Updated 1715 GMT (0115 HKT)

Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest storms in recorded history, left thousands of victims in its wake.

[Devastation on the road to Tacloban](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 1719 GMT (0119 HKT)

CNN's Paula Hancocks reports on the grim scene around the city of Tacloban, Philippines, following Super Typhoon Haiyan.

[Town crushed by 'giant hand'](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 1240 GMT (2040 HKT)

'I was gob-smacked as we made our final approach into the ruins of the airport in Tacloban,' says CNN's Ivan Watson.

[Photos: Haiyan's wrath from above](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 2105 GMT (0505 HKT)

Flattened forests and flooded villages in the Philippines seen from the air.

[Philippines official: Worst storm ever](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 2058 GMT (0458 HKT)

Christiane Amanpour speaks to the Philippines Secretary of Health about the devastation brought on by Super Typhoon Haiyan.

[Typhoon Haiyan relief efforts](#)

November 13, 2013 -- Updated 0127 GMT (0927 HKT)

Troops and aid organizations help Filipinos struggling to survive the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest storms in recorded history.

[Water, wicked wind, fire create chaos](#)

November 11, 2013 -- Updated 0727 GMT (1527 HKT)

It was the cruelest of ironies unleashed by Super Typhoon Haiyan.

[Tacloban residents plead for help](#)

November 10, 2013 -- Updated 1403 GMT (2203 HKT)



CNN's Andrew Stevens was on the ground in Tacloban as Typhoon Haiyan brought a storm surge to the Philippines coast.

[Photos: Typhoon Haiyan](#)

November 13, 2013 -- Updated 0210 GMT (1010 HKT)

The storm affected 4.3 million people in 36 provinces and displaced more than 340,000.

[CNN crew helps rescue typhoon victims](#)

November 9, 2013 -- Updated 1801 GMT (0201 HKT)

CNN Producer Tim Schwarz and CNN Anchor Andrew Stevens help rescue people inside a hotel during Typhoon Haiyan.

[Children ripped from parents' arms](#)

November 10, 2013 -- Updated 1637 GMT (0037 HKT)

No building in this coastal city of 200,000 residents appears to have escaped damage from Super Typhoon Haiyan.

[Are you there? Share your story](#)

Are you in the affected area? Send us your images and video but please stay safe.

[Philippines gets more than its share of disasters](#)

November 10, 2013 -- Updated 1954 GMT (0354 HKT)

Powered by ferocious winds, the fast-moving Super Typhoon Haiyan swept through the Philippines, a country of more than 92 million people all too familiar with destructive storms.

[Typhoon aftermath 'apocalyptic'](#)

November 10, 2013 -- Updated 1421 GMT (2221 HKT)

Storm chaser, James Reynolds shot some incredible video of the super typhoon as it hit Tacloban City.

[U.S. offers aid, sends rescue teams](#)

November 10, 2013 -- Updated 0021 GMT (0821 HKT)

The U.S. government had pledged an array of support from monetary aid to search-and-rescue missions to help typhoon-devastated Philippines.

[Cleanup begins after super typhoon](#)

November 8, 2013 -- Updated 2217 GMT (0617 HKT)

Cleanup efforts are beginning after Super Typhoon Haiyan left the Philippines devastated. CNN's Paula Hancocks reports.

[Witness: Typhoon was 'intense'](#)



Witness Joe Curry, with Catholic Relief Services, was on Bohol Island when the typhoon hit.

[Water levels reached second floor](#)

November 9, 2013 -- Updated 0340 GMT (1140 HKT)

Paula Hancocks describes what she saw while flying over the region devastated by Super Typhoon Haiyan.



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