

112 Dead, Scores More Injured in Devastating Colombian Landslide

A landslide in Colombia's southwestern border province of Putumayo sent mud and debris crashing onto houses overnight, killing 112 people and injuring at least 120, officials said on Saturday.

Heavy rains caused several rivers to overflow, pushing sediment onto buildings and roads in the provincial capital of Mocoa.

"It has just been reported to me that we have 112 people dead," President Juan Manuel Santos said after arriving in Mocoa and declaring a state of emergency. "We will keep looking."

Local police said earlier on Saturday that 93 bodies had been recovered. The disaster response unit said 120 people were injured.

"We have sent a team of 150 people to make our response effective and machinery began work immediately," Carlos Ivan Marquez, head of the unit, said in a statement. "We will be with the governor and the mayor giving all necessary attention."

Photos posted on Twitter by the air force showed neighborhood streets filled with mud and damaged houses, while cell phone videos on social media showed residents searching for survivors in the debris.

"It's a big area," Mocoa Mayor Jose Antonio Castro told Caracol on Saturday. "A big portion of the many houses were just taken by the avalanche, but above all, the people were

warned with enough time and they were able to get out, but houses in 17 neighborhoods have basically been erased.”

Two bridges also were destroyed, Castro said.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos is on his way to the area, the government said. Santos said on Twitter that he was praying for the victims.

Heavy rains and a mountainous landscape regularly cause landslides in the Andean country. {eoa}

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