2012 Widespread Flooding in Kumamoto

Disaster Record 5

Weather Overview

On the afternoon of July 11th, 2012, a rainy season front that had been stationary near the Korean Peninsula moved south to the Tsushima Strait by the morning of the 12th. From the early to late morning of the 12th, thunderclouds repeatedly occurred in a phenomenon called "back-building," leading to intense rain and thunder centered around the Kumamoto, Kikuchi, and Aso regions. In Aso Otome (Aso City), 288.55mm of rain fell in the three hours of rain before 5 AM, and 108mm was recorded in the following hour until 5:53 AM (both the highest recorded figures in history). Almost half of the total amount of rain that normally falls during the entire rainy season fell in just five hours' time on that early morning of July 12th.

Ongoing search at site of landslide in Mikubo, Aso City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

24-hour rainfall in Otohime, Aso (July 12th):

493mm

(most ever recorded)

Damage Overview

Record-setting rain starting the morning of July 12th, 2012, led to river floods and landslides throughout the prefecture, resulting in a total of 25 people dead or missing and severe damage to homes, public works facilities, and critical lifelines.

Firefighters perform a search at the site of a landslide in Aso City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Household belongings scattered at a disaster site in Aso City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Deaths:

23

Deaths	23	(Aso City: 21, Minamiaso: 2)
Missing	2	(Aso City: 1, Takamori: 1)
Seriously injured	4	(Minamiaso: 2, Aso City: 1, Ozu: 1)
Minor injuries	7	(Kumamoto City: 3, Kikuchi: 2, Ubuyama: 1, Minamiaso: 1)

Homes damaged:

3,408

Complete destruction	169	Above-floor flooding	544
Partial destruction	1,293	Below-floor flooding	1,367
Partial damage	35		

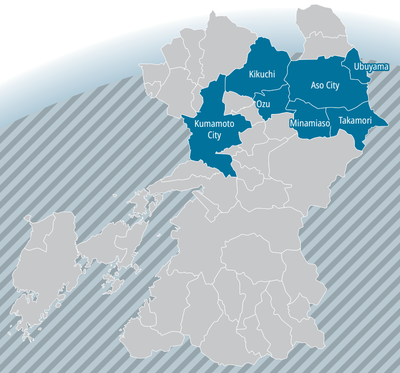
Non-residential buildings damaged:

1,045

Public buildings	23	Other	1,022

Total damage amount:

¥68.5 billion



Resident Evacuation

In conditions of heavy rain and thunder that made it impossible to hear people's voices, it was difficult for residents to evacuate, and the effect of mutual aid (such as telling neighbors to evacuate) was limited.

An evacuation shelter in Minamiaso
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Evacuation Shelter Operations

Kumamoto City, Aso City, and Minamiaso suffered extensive damage. Many evacuation shelters opened after evacuation advisories and orders were issued, and a total of 23,051 people evacuated.

Because hotels and ryokans implemented barrier-free designs and were equipped with nursing and sanitary goods, they were used as welfare evacuation shelters.

Peak number of evacuees:

2,317

Peak number of evacuation shelters:

32

Initial Response

The prefecture set up a Disaster Response Headquarters at 7AM on July 12th, and approximately 100 people were mobilized for the initial response. Requests were made to the Self-Defense Forces for disaster dispatch and Oita Prefecture for helicopter support. Immediately following the disaster, difficult rescue activities were carried out through cooperation between fire brigades, fire departments, police, Self-Defense Forces, the Coast Guard, the Kyushu Regional Development Bureau, local municipalities, and the prefecture.

Kumamoto Prefecture Disaster Response Headquarters
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Relief & Rescue Operations

Immediately after the disaster on July 12th, rescue operations were carried out in collaboration with police, fire services, Self-Defense Forces, the Coast Guard, local municipalities, and the prefecture, rescuing a total of 329 people.

Rescue operations at the site of a landslide in Ichinomiya, Aso City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Medical Relief

The prefecture worked together with local municipalities and health and medical organizations (the Kumamoto Prefecture branch of the Japanese Red Cross, medical institutions, medical associations, dental associations, nursing associations, etc.) to provide health management and mental care through visits to evacuation shelters immediately after the disaster.

Care being administered at a hospital in Uchinomaki, Aso City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Support for Disaster Victims

Kumamoto Prefecture continuously checks municipal damage reports collected at the Disaster Response Headquarters, decides whether to apply the Disaster Relief Act and the Act Concerning Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of Disaster Victims, handles the distribution of supplies, and deals with disaster waste.

Distributing Supplies

Some disaster-stricken areas had trouble getting the supplies needed to operate evacuation shelters, so supplies were provided from the prefecture's stockpile and from contracted companies.

Delivering supplies at Aso City Gym
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Disposal of Disaster Waste

A temporary waste site was set up because the existing site had been flooded. However, unsorted mixed waste was brought to the temporary site and needed to be sorted before disposal.

Disposing of disaster waste in Tatsuda, Kumamoto City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Disaster Volunteers

Kumamoto City and Aso City worked together with the Prefectural Social Welfare Council to set up volunteer centers the next day, allowing volunteers to get to work quickly.

Total number of volunteers:

24,109

Volunteers working in Tatsuda, Kumamoto City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)