

= Tropical Storm Bilis =

Severe Tropical Storm Bilis , known in the Philippines as Tropical Storm Florita , was a weak tropical cyclone in July 2006 that caused significant damage to areas of the Philippines , Taiwan , and southeastern China . The word Bilis , submitted by the Philippines , means ' speed ' or ' swiftness ' in Tagalog .

Despite never officially reaching typhoon strength , Bilis was responsible for \$ 4 @. @ 4 billion ( 2006 USD ) in damage and 859 fatalities in the Philippines , Taiwan , and China . Most of the damage was caused by heavy rain , which triggered widespread flash flooding and landslides . Many of the areas Bilis flooded were later affected by Typhoon Kaemi , Typhoon Prapiroon , and intense Typhoon Saomai .

= = Meteorological history = =

A tropical disturbance developed northeast of Yap on July 7 and slowly increased in organization . The Joint Typhoon Warning Center ( JTWC ) issued a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert on the disturbance later that day as it moved northwestward . By July 8 , it had developed sufficient convection to be designated a tropical depression by the JTWC and the Japan Meteorological Agency ( JMA ) . The depression continued to strengthen , and was designated Tropical Storm Bilis by the JMA early on July 9 . The JTWC upgraded Bilis to tropical storm status later that day . On July 10 , Bilis moved into the area of responsibility of the Philippine Atmospheric , Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration ( PAGASA ) , and was designated Tropical Storm Florita for local warnings .

Over the next several days , Bilis moved generally northwestward toward Taiwan , slowly strengthening over open waters . Bilis was designated a severe tropical storm by the JMA on July 11 , but the storm did not strengthen much further over the next few days due to a marginal upper @-@ air environment and dry air entrainment . PAGASA upgraded the system to typhoon status on July 12 , but the JMA never officially recognized the system as such in its advisories . Bilis reached its official peak intensity of 60 knots ( 110 km / h , 70 mph ) later that day .

Bilis made its first landfall in northern Taiwan on July 13 , with an intensity of 55 kt ( 100 km / h , 65 mph ) . After moving across northern Taiwan , Bilis made its second landfall in Fujian , China early on July 14 at the same intensity , then weakened into a tropical depression over land the next day . Bilis lingered as a tropical depression over southeastern China before degenerating into a remnant low on July 16 . But the JMA carried the system as a tropical depression until July 17 . Despite becoming a remnant low , the remnants of Bilis maintained their identity for several days while moving westward over China , bringing heavy rains to inland areas .

= = Preparations = =

On July 13 , PAGASA issued Storm Signal Number 3 , a warning for winds of 100 ? 185 km / h ( 62 ? 115 mph ) , for the Batanes and Calayan Islands . Storm Signal Number 2 , for winds of 60 ? 100 km / h ( 37 ? 62 mph ) , was issued for northern Luzon , including the rest of Cagayan , Ilocos Norte , and Apayao . Storm Signal Number 1 ( 30 ? 60 km / h , 19 ? 37 mph ) was raised for most of central Luzon , including much of the Cordillera Administrative Region and the northern half of the Ilocos Region . Schools and government offices in those regions were closed .

The provincial observatory of Fujian issued a typhoon warning for the province on July 11 , well in advance of Bilis ' final landfall . In response to the warning , officials evacuated over 800 @, @ 000 people from Hunan and 70 @, @ 000 from Zhejiang . In addition , 256 @, @ 000 fishermen and workers were evacuated from coastal areas in southeastern China , and 220 @, @ 000 ships were ordered to return to port . In Shanghai , the evacuations caused significant rail and bus delays , and more than 210 flights in and out of the city were canceled prior to landfall .

= = Impact = =

== Philippines ==

The strongest winds and heaviest rains were south and east of Bilis ' center , and its outer rainbands swept across Luzon in the Philippines , causing heavy rains , wind gusts to tropical storm force , flash flooding , and landslides . Bilis was responsible for 45 million pesos in damage and at least 14 deaths , including three in Baguio City , and six more in the Manila area .

== Taiwan ==

Damage was light in Taiwan , due to Bilis ' quick movement across the northern coast of the island . The Republic of China government reported four deaths , two of which were the deaths of fishermen from mainland China whose boat ran aground on Matsu Island . Another man was electrocuted in the city of Taipei as a result of the storm . The cause of the fourth death is unknown .

== China ==

The storm made its second landfall in Fujian province , China , which was the province most impacted by the tropical cyclone . A total of 92 deaths and 3 billion Chinese yuan in damage were caused by the system , mostly from flooding . Schools and tourist attractions in the province were closed for several days . A total of 4 @, @ 028 @, @ 000 people were affected over an area of 17 @, @ 597 square kilometres ( 6 @, @ 794 sq mi ) , and the storm caused the evacuation of 519 @, @ 000 people from the province .

Flooding killed 39 people in eastern Guangxi and 183 people in Guangdong . Eight more people were killed in Yunnan when a flash flood swept away some road workers ' huts . A weather station in Guangdong reported a 5 @-@ hour rainfall total of 360 @. @ 6 mm ( 14 @. @ 2 inches ) . In Zhejiang , strong winds and heavy rain from Bilis caused 694 million yuan in damage , and a wind gust to 43 m / s ( 155 km / h , 96 mph ) was reported .

Several sections of the Beijing @-@ Guangzhou railway , a main rail route in China , were blocked by flooding and landslides , causing many delays and diversions . One train was surrounded by floodwaters in Lechang , and passengers had to be evacuated to a nearby school . At least 274 trains were affected and the train company refunded nearly 2 million tickets . After three days of repair work , the rail service resumed normal operations on July 18 .

Significant damage occurred in Hunan , where heavy flooding and mudslides destroyed over 31 @, @ 000 homes and caused 526 deaths . Most of the damage and fatalities occurred in the village of Zixing , where local officials reported the flooding as the worst the area had seen in the past 100 years , and described the death toll as " unprecedented " . In all , Bilis was responsible for 843 deaths , 208 people reported missing , and \$ 4 @. @ 4 billion ( 2006 USD ) in damage to southeastern China .

== Aftermath ==

Bilis and its associated flooding left over 400 @, @ 000 people homeless , and over 2 million more had to be evacuated in the face of rising waters . Following the storm , the Red Cross Society of China provided food , blankets , and water purification kits to over 100 @, @ 000 Hunan residents in mass evacuation shelters . The relief effort was complicated by an earthquake in Yunnan , as well as three more tropical cyclones : Typhoon Kaemi , Typhoon Prapiroon , and Typhoon Saomai . All of the storms were stronger than Bilis , and exacerbated flooding and other problems in the region .

Because of the sudden large increase in the number of reported deaths in Hunan in a matter of hours , Chinese government officials accused local officials of covering up damage and casualty details . The Ministry of Civil Affairs sent a team to Hunan to investigate the allegations , and issued a notice stating that anyone found to be covering up any damage details would be held accountable

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The China Meteorological Administration released a press release after the storm and gave four reasons for the extensive damage . First , the storm decelerated after landfall and maintained its identity for 120 hours while moving south of due west . Secondly , the storm was asymmetric and rainfall concentrated in the southern semicircle . Also , the storm interacted with the active monsoon over the South China Sea , and the Hong Kong Observatory reported a 1 @-@ hour rainfall total of 115 @.@ 1 mm ( 4 @.@ 5 inches ) , a new record . Finally , previous rainfall had made the area wetter than normal and more prone to flooding .

At the 39th annual meeting of the ESCAP / WMO Typhoon Committee in Manila in December 2006 , the name Bilis was retired , along with four other names . In December 2007 , the committee selected the name Maliksi to replace Bilis on the Western Pacific basin name lists beginning in 2008

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