

Surigao del Sur Governor Johnny Pimentel said Tuesday that Surigao del Sur is now under a state of calamity due to flooding and landslides that hit the province as a result of heavy rains since the start of the new year.

Pimentel, in text messages to this writer, said two persons were confirmed dead -- one in Aras-Asan, Cagwait town, and another who drowned in Tago River in Tago, Surigao del Sur.

Three others were reported missing while one was hurt when a tree fell on him in Antao, Carmen, Surigao del Sur. One of those missing was hit by huge waves in Bislig City.

The victims were not immediately identified, the governor said.

Pimentel said that as the rains subsided at around 10 a.m. Tuesday, a portion of the national highway in Tago, Surigao del Sur became passable to vehicles again. The road is the only access route to and from Tandag, Surigao del Sur, capital town of the province.

Official reports from the regional Office of Civil Defense (OCD) as of Tuesday morning said at least 155,903 persons in Surigao del Sur alone were affected by the calamity.

A total of 114 barangays from 17 municipalities of Surigao del Sur were affected by floods and landslides, the OCD reports said.

The amount of damage in both private and public properties in Surigao del Sur has not yet been tallied. The OCD said several major roads, bridges and irrigation canals worth millions of pesos were damaged.

OCD officials also said they have not yet received official reports from the Department of Agriculture on the amount of damage to agricultural crops, livestock, fishponds and fish cages.

“We are still awaiting the official reports from them although there are initial reports that millions of pesos worth of crops, especially rice, were damaged in the entire Caraga region” OCD regional director Dr. Blanche Gobenciong said.