Beat: News

14 dead, dozens feared missing in Washington state mudslide

-, 25.03.2014, 03:22 Time

USPA News - Fourteen people are confirmed dead and more than 100 people could be unaccounted for after a mudslide destroyed dozens of houses in Washington state over the weekend, authorities said on Monday as hope began to fade for finding any more survivors. Snohomish County Fire District 21 Chief Travis Hots, appearing emotional at a press conference on late Monday, said rescue workers had found no signs of survivors during Monday`s operation.

He said six additional bodies had been recovered during the day, raising the overall number of fatalities to at least fourteen. John Pennington, who heads the county`s Department of Emergency Management, added that authorities had collected a total of 176 names of people who may be unaccounted for after the mudslide. He emphasized the number was likely to decrease "dramatically" as the list may include duplicates and individuals who are not actually missing. The devastating landslide happened over the weekend and struck an area of State Route 530 in Oso, between Arlington and Darrington, in Snohomish County. It was first reported at the 29400 block of SR 530, near milepost 37, at around 10:45 a.m. local time on Saturday morning. The slide cut off the city of Darrington, completely blocked SR 530 and blocked the north fork of the Stillaguamish River at Whitman Road. Initial reports were that the slide was at least 41.1 meters (134.8 feet) wide and 54.9 meters (180.1 feet) across, destroying dozens of structures. Rescue workers continued working at the scene on Monday while being assisted by two helicopters from the Sheriff`s Office, search dogs and hovercraft in an effort to find victims. But ground operations remained extremely hazardous due to the debris field - described by rescuers as a "quicksand-like consistency." Rescue workers, more than 100 working at the scene on Monday, were approaching the slide area from both the east and west sides in an attempt to locate additional victims, but Pennington said it was unlikely more survivors will be found. According to the Sheriff`s Office, the cause of the slide is believed to be ground water saturation from heavy rainfall in the area earlier this month. The number of land parcels affected was confirmed at 112 - of which at least 49 had some form of structure - including a number of homes. The north fork of the Stillaguamish River remained backed up due to the slide, creating a new river channel and causing at least seven homes to be flooded, with more flooding expected. Also on Monday, U.S. President Barack Obama, who is currently on a visit to the Netherlands, signed an emergency declaration for Washington state and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local response efforts in the affected area, the White House said. It authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to mobilize and provide the needed equipment and resources. The Red Cross confirmed Sunday that shelters at Post Middle School and The Darrington Community Center housed occupants affected by the landslide. The total number of people displaced by the disaster remained unclear.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-2039/14-dead-dozens-feared-missing-in-washington-state-mudslide.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619