Super Typhoon Haima batters Philippines

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The Philippines has been hit by Super Typhoon Haima, bringing sustained winds of up to 225km/h (140mph).

The storm made landfall over Cagayan in the north on Wednesday, but there were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries.

Tens of thousands of people had been evacuated from threatened areas as the storm approached.

There was widespread damage overnight, with homes destroyed and power lines brought down.

Experts had feared Haima could prove as destructive as the catastrophic super typhoon Haiyan, which claimed more than 7,350 lives in 2013.

The Philippines endures around 20 major storms every year, many of them deadly.

Powerful winds brought down power lines and tore of roofs (AP)
Residents driven from their homes by Super Typhoon Haima take shelter at an evacuation centre (Reuters)

It's just days since thousands fled the path of Typhoon Sarika (EPA)
The storm was upgraded to a super typhoon just before it hit, making landfall in Penablanca, a town in Cagayan province, around 23:00 local time (1500 GMT) on Wednesday.

"We can't go out because the wind is so intense, trees are being forced down," local councillor Elisa Arugay told DZMM radio from Camasi village in Penablanca.

On Thursday morning, there were reports of damage across a wide area.

"Rice and corn plants as far as the eye can see are flattened," Villamor Visaya, a teacher in the northern city of Ilagan told the AFP.

"Many houses were destroyed. I saw one school building crushed under a large tree... it was as if our house was being pulled from its foundations."

Haima, known as Lawin locally, had a weather band 800km (500 miles) wide, and authorities had warned the public to expect fierce winds and storm surges up to five metres (16 feet) or higher.

Haima is the second typhoon to hit the Philippines in a week, after Sarika struck on Sunday. At least one person was killed in that storm, and three people are still missing.

Haima is now moving out across the South China Sea towards Hong Kong and southern China.