

Philippine refugee tent fire kills mother, five kids

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — An overnight fire razed a tent used as a temporary shelter by survivors of Typhoon Haiyan (also known as Typhoon Yolanda), killing a woman and five of her children, including a four-month-old girl, according to officials in a central Philippine city devastated by the massive storm.

The tragedy highlights the slow progress in the resettlement of tens of thousands of survivors of the disaster, which struck more than six months ago and is one of the world's strongest typhoons to make landfall.

The fire was caused by a kerosene lamp and quickly consumed the canvass tent just after midnight, Tacloban city disaster management officer Derrick Anido said. The shelter was one of 40 in a "tent city" in San Jose district, which was wiped out by tsunami-like storm surges and fierce winds from Typhoon Haiyan in November.

The five children who died in the fire ranged in age from four months to 12 years old, Anido said. The woman's seven-year-old son, the lone survivor, was fighting for his life in a government hospital.

"It happened around 12:20 ... but it was



so fast that by 12:30 it was over," Anido said, adding that everyone was sleeping when the fire broke out. "Unfortunately, after surviving (the typhoon), they were

killed in a fire."

Tacloban is still trying to recover from the devastation wrought by the typhoon, which barreled through the central

TERRIBLE TRAGEDY. A tent city for typhoon survivors is seen in Tacloban city, central Philippines, in this November 23, 2013 file photo. An overnight fire razed a tent used as a temporary shelter by the survivors of Typhoon Haiyan (also known as Typhoon Yolanda), killing a woman and five of her children, according to officials. The tragedy highlights the slow progress in the resettlement of tens of thousands of survivors of the disaster, which struck more than six months ago and is one of the world's strongest typhoons to make landfall. (AP Photo/Bullit Marquez)

Philippines, killing at least 6,300 people and displacing more than 4 million.

"The problem is that so many people are still living in tents and we have been saying all along that these tents are fire hazards," Anido said. "And we have been requesting (the national government) to relocate them to safer shelters."

He said only 1,000 temporary houses made of wood with galvanized iron roofing had been built so far, while 14,000 families in the city still live in vulnerable coastal villages and need to be relocated.

Anido also said the site where the tents donated by the United Nations are located is prone to flooding. "It is almost June and it will soon be rainy season in Tacloban, and this will again be a problem," he said.

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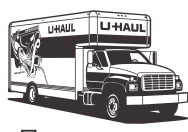
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