

KB floods also linked to Ranau quake: Geologist

DE 22.10.17 2

KOTA KINABALU: The severe floods now being experienced in Kota Belud are not just due to bad weather as they are likely to also be linked to the devastating earthquake that hit nearby Ranau in June 2015, a geologist said.



Felix Tongkul (pic), a professor at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), said the flooding was caused by a combination of heavy rain together with debris and mud that had flowed into the Kadamaian River following the earthquake.

The sedimentation had made the river's channel shallower and thus unable to cope with the huge amount of rain pouring in from Mount Kinabalu, he said.

He added that the high volume of water was also brought about by surface run-off on land, as the catchment area

around the mountain had been degraded due to reduced vegetation cover.

He said almost all the villages along the river were suffering due to the phenomena.

This included areas that had never seen such floods, which have caused more than 2,500 people to be displaced in the affected areas.

"It appears that my worst fears on the post-impact of the Ranau earthquake has become a reality," Tongkul told FMT.

In the aftermath of the quake, Tongkul had warned that the tremor and subsequent aftershocks, numbering more than 100, had loosened rocks, boulders, soil and vegetation on the mountain slopes.

He had said that all these would eventually flow into the rivers, including the Kadamaian, Penanaran and Liwagu, and cause mudslides.

Sabah has been battered by the tail-end of Typhoon Lan (called Paolo in the Philippines) which passed through the

Philippines since Oct 15.

Heavy rain and strong winds have caused damage all over the State's west coast as Civil Defence Force personnel were kept busy in the low-lying Kota Belud district due to floods.

The weather improved slightly on Saturday with no rain, although it was still too windy to completely rule out another bout of heavy downpour later.

The Fire and Rescue Services Department also reported that water levels at the three main rivers of Kadamaian, Abai and Tempasuk were dropping.

It reported that since Monday the department had been called to remove a total of 194 fallen trees all over Sabah.

The earthquake on June 5, 2015 had struck with magnitude of 6 on the Richter scale.

It led to 18 people, mostly climbers from a school in Singapore, being killed on Mount Kinabalu, while about 137 others who were also scaling the mountain were stranded but later rescued.