

Kilauea Volcano's Eruptions Could Continue for Months or Years, Report Says

At a Glance

- A new report from the Hawaii Volcano Observatory says the eruptions at the Kilauea Volcano could continue for months or years.
- Lava flows have been reported at the lower East Rift Zone since May 3.
- Since the eruptions began, more than 700 homes have been destroyed on the Big Island.

While Hawaii's Kilauea Volcano has been erupting almost continuously since 1983, a recent spate of eruptions that have destroyed hundreds of homes could continue indefinitely, according to a new report.

Issued by the U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaii Volcano Observatory, the report says the eruptions in Kilauea's lower East Rift Zone could become the longest ever recorded at the volcano, as the lava flows show no sign of slowing down. That could mean more homes in danger, and with more than 700 dwellings destroyed since the lava flows began May 3, it's already a full-blown disaster.



In this photo provided by the U.S. Geological Survey, lava from Kilauea volcano's last remaining active fissure erupts in the Leilani Estates neighborhood on Saturday, July 14, 2018 near Pahoa, Hawaii. (U.S. Geological Survey via AP)

"Given this volume and the sustained withdrawal of magma from the summit reservoir without appreciable deformation in the lower East Rift Zone, it is most likely that the LERZ eruption may continue for months to years," said the report.

Furthermore, with no signs that the eruptions are slowing down, this also raises fears that new channels could form, diverting lava to other areas previously untouched by fissure openings. If that happens, more residential areas could be in danger.

Nearly three months after the eruptions began, lava has covered more than 12

square miles of land, and one fissure - fissure 8 - is the main source of the lava flows in recent weeks. Scientists will continue to study this fissure, and if the pressure drops, it could be a sign that the eruption is waning.

The report was given to the Hawaii County Civil Defense in an effort to better prepare for possible impacts from the continued eruption, according to CNN.com.

"If the ongoing eruption maintains its current style of activity at a high eruption rate, then it may take months to a year or two to wind down," said the report. "While this seems to be the most likely outcome, a pause in the eruption, followed by additional activity, cannot be ruled out, nor can an abrupt cessation or a transition to steady, longer-lived activity at a lower effusion rate."

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