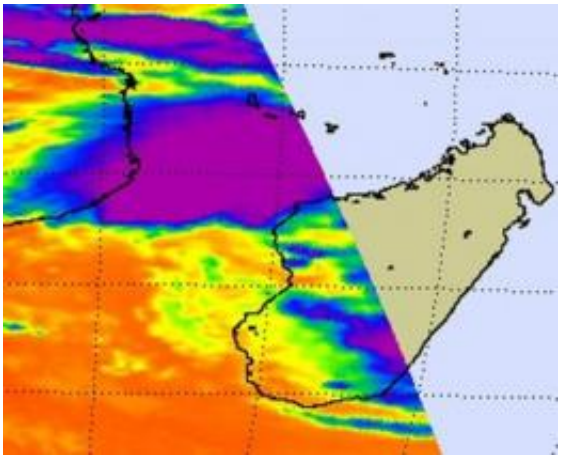
NASA satellite sees most of Cyclone Bingiza's rainfall over Mozambique Channel

February 15 2011



NASA's Aqua satellite captured cold thunderstorm cloud tops (purple) to the north and west of the center of Tropical Storm Bingiza in this infrared image of Feb. 15 at 11:11 UTC. Credit: NASA JPL, Ed Olsen

Infrared data from NASA's AIRS instrument revealed that the low level center of Cyclone Bingiza was still over land in western Madagascar this morning, but the bulk of its rainfall was over the Mozambique Channel.

When NASA's Aqua satellite flew over Madagascar this morning, Feb. 15 at 11:11 UTC (6:11 a.m. EST), the Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) instrument read the temperatures of the cold thunderstorm cloud tops in Cyclone Bingiza. Most of the strongest thunderstorms were north and west of the center of circulation already over the Mozambique

Channel, while Bingiza's center remains over the western part of the island nation.

At 0900 UTC (4 a.m. EST) on Feb. 15, Tropical Cyclone Bingiza had maximum sustained winds near 35 knots (40 mph/64 kmh) so it was still a tropical storm. It was centered about 180 miles (289 km) north-northwest of Antananarivo, Madagascar, near 16.4 South and 45.2 East. It was moving west near 10 knots (11 mph/18 kmh).

At 1 a.m. EST (0600 UTC) Majunga, Madagascar reported north winds at 17 knots (20 mph/31 kmh) and an atmospheric pressure of 997 millibars. Majunga is a seaport city, a district, and a province on the northwest coast of Madagascar. Mahajanga is the capital city of the Boeny region as well as the Mahajanga Province.

Forecasters at the Joint Typhoon Warning Center expect Bingiza to move entirely into the eastern Mozambique Channel later today. A trough (elongated area) of low pressure will then push Bingiza parallel to the western coastline of Madagascar and forecasters expect the warm waters of the Channel and the low wind shear to allow it to re-strengthen. Bingiza is expected to turn toward the east and make a second landfall in southwestern Madagascar later this week.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center