

Powerful cyclone nears France's Reunion island

January 2 2014



A cyclonic swell sweeps a pier on January 2, 2014 in Saint-Gilles, in the French La Reunion overseas island

A cyclone packing winds of 150 kilometres (93 miles) per hour neared the French Indian Ocean island of La Reunion on Thursday, lashing the coast with huge waves and leaving thousands of homes without power.

One person had already been seriously wounded and seven others suffered light injuries in accidents caused by the [strong winds](#) of

incoming [cyclone](#) Bejisa.

State-run power supplier EDF said about 82,000 households on the island—which is on red alert—had no electricity.

Waves more than eight metres (26 feet) high were lashing the coast, and were expected to get even higher during the course of the afternoon.

Several trees and traffic lights were uprooted on the island.

The French weather service predicted that Bejisa would pack winds of up to 200 km/h later in the day.

"The cyclone has not even struck and yet it has caused so much damage," said a resident from the western town of Saint-Gilles.

"I don't know what will happen when it's over us."

La Reunion suffered heavy damage in 2002 due to cyclone Dina, which claimed six lives and caused widespread flooding.

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