

'Zombie' storm Leslie smashes into Portugal

October 14 2018, by Thomas Cabral



The region around capital Lisbon and the centre of the country at Coimbra and Leiria were worst hit with trees uprooted, cars and houses damaged and local flooding reported

Violent storms hit Portugal early on Sunday, leaving hundreds of thousands of people without power before carrying heavy rain on into Spain, authorities said.

Leslie, which was a category one hurricane but weakened to a post-tropical storm as it made landfall late Saturday, left 28 people with minor injuries, civil defence commander Luis Belo Costa told reporters.

The region around the capital Lisbon and the centre of the country at Coimbra and Leiria were worst hit with trees uprooted, cars and houses damaged and local flooding reported.

Aveiro, Viseu and Porto in the north also suffered damage with rescue services reporting a total of 2,500 incidents.

The civil defence services said 324,000 people were left without electricity while more than 60 people had to leave their damaged homes and flee to safety.

Power was being restored across the north and centre of the country during the morning.

Leslie was dubbed a "zombie" [hurricane](#) as it first formed on September 23, only to meander through the Atlantic Ocean for weeks before making landfall.

There were fears it could be the worst storm to hit the region in more than 150 years, but it weakened to a [post-tropical storm](#) before reaching the Portuguese coastline.



Leslie smashed into homes in the beach resort town of Figueira da Foz, near Coimbra

"The greatest danger has passed," Costa said. "The north and centre were the worst affected."

More than two dozen flights were cancelled in or out of Lisbon.

At Mealhada, in Aveiro district, the roof blew off an indoor sports stadium putting an end to the European final of the women's roller hockey competition.

Portuguese authorities had urged those living by the coast to batten down the hatches and stay indoors, while telling fishermen at sea to return to

the nearest port.

The beach resort of Figueira da Foz, near Coimbra, saw a peak gust of 176 kilometres per hour (109 mph), France's La Chaine Meteo reported.

"I have never seen anything like it," one witness told SIC television.

"The town seemed to be in a state of war with cars smashed by fallen trees," he said. "People were very worried."



Hurricane Leslie weakened to a post-tropical storm before reaching the Portuguese coastline in the early hours of Sunday

Only five hurricanes have ever arrived in this region of the Atlantic Ocean, and it had been feared Leslie could turn out to be the most powerful storm to hit Portugal since 1842.

Over the past 176 years, only Hurricane Vince has made landfall on the Iberian peninsula, hitting southern Spain in 2005, according to weather records.

In October 2017, strong winds from passing Hurricane Ophelia fed forest fires that killed around 40 people during a heatwave.

Ophelia then made [landfall](#) in Ireland as a violent [storm](#), killing three people.

On Tuesday, intense rain sparked flash floods in the Spanish holiday island of Majorca, killing 12 [people](#).

© 2018 AFP

Citation: 'Zombie' storm Leslie smashes into Portugal (2018, October 14) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-10-zombie-storm-leslie-portugal.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.