

US East Coast braces for hurricane after Florida escapes

August 3 2020, by Leila MacOr



People walk along the beach in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina as Tropical Storm Isaias is set to strengthen into a hurricane and could hit the state

Tropical Storm Isaias was set to regain hurricane strength Monday before slamming into the US eastern seaboard, bringing life-threatening

storm surges to North and South Carolina.

The storm, currently 90 miles (145 kilometers) off the coast of Georgia, was packing sustained winds of 70 miles per hour, with [wind speeds](#) predicted to increase during the day.

Isaias is forecast to "make landfall tonight as a hurricane... expected to bring [strong winds](#) and heavy rainfall," the National Hurricane Center said, adding the storm would likely hit close to the border between North and South Carolina.

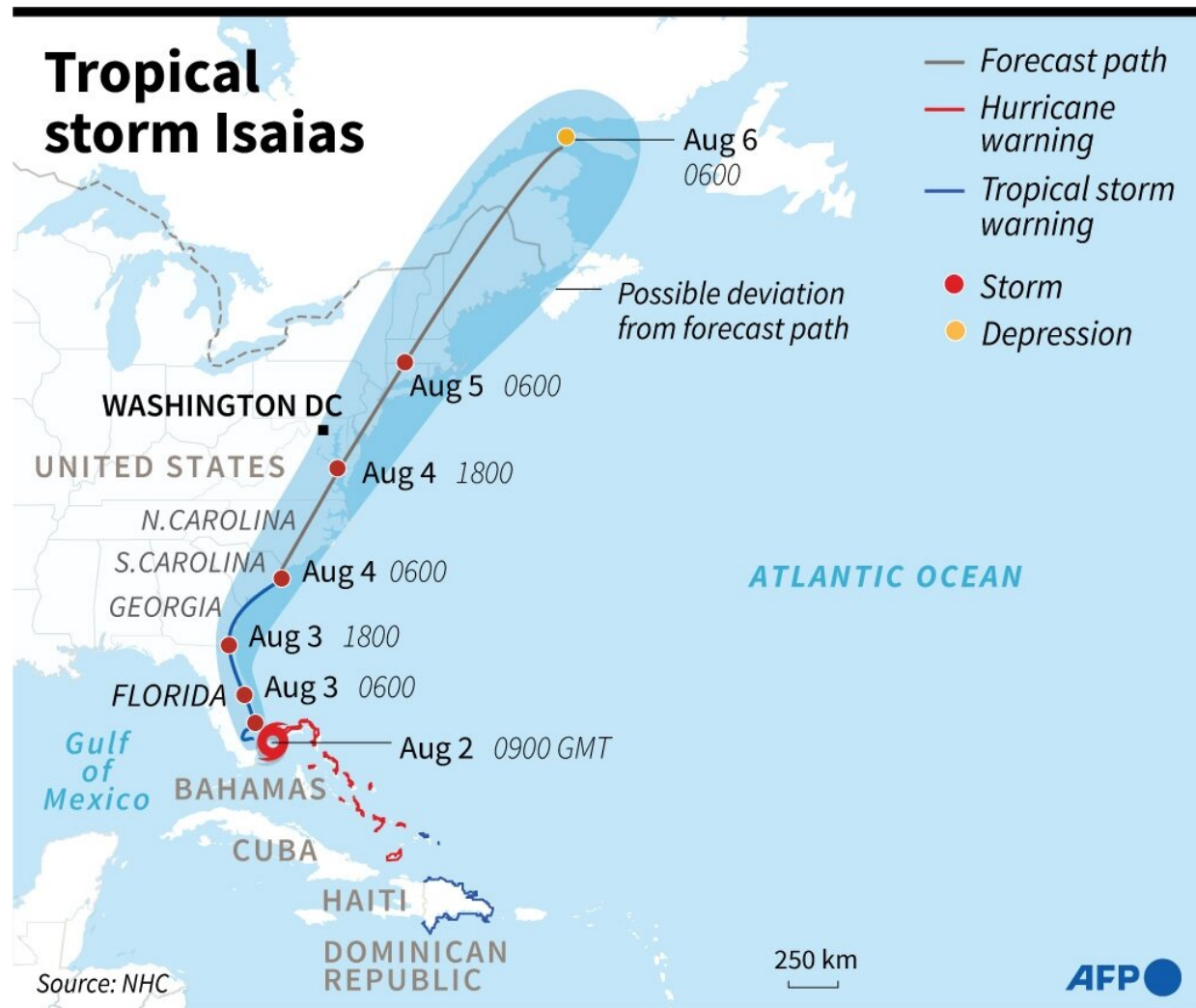
Storm surges could generate water three to five feet above [ground level](#).

The storm will then track up the East Coast, with [heavy rainfall](#) expected to cause flash flooding through the mid-Atlantic states and bringing storm-force winds to Washington, Philadelphia and New York on Tuesday.

Residents in flood-prone areas "should take all necessary actions to protect life and property from rising water and the potential for other dangerous conditions," the National Hurricane Center said.

In the hurricane warning zone, "preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion," it added.

'Pack your masks'



Forecast path of tropical storm Isaias

The Carolinas have seen a recent surge in coronavirus cases as the US struggles to curb the spread of the potentially fatal illness.

"We in North Carolina mostly know what to do," the state's governor, Roy Cooper, said Sunday.

"You pack your emergency kit, follow local evacuation orders, stay in a

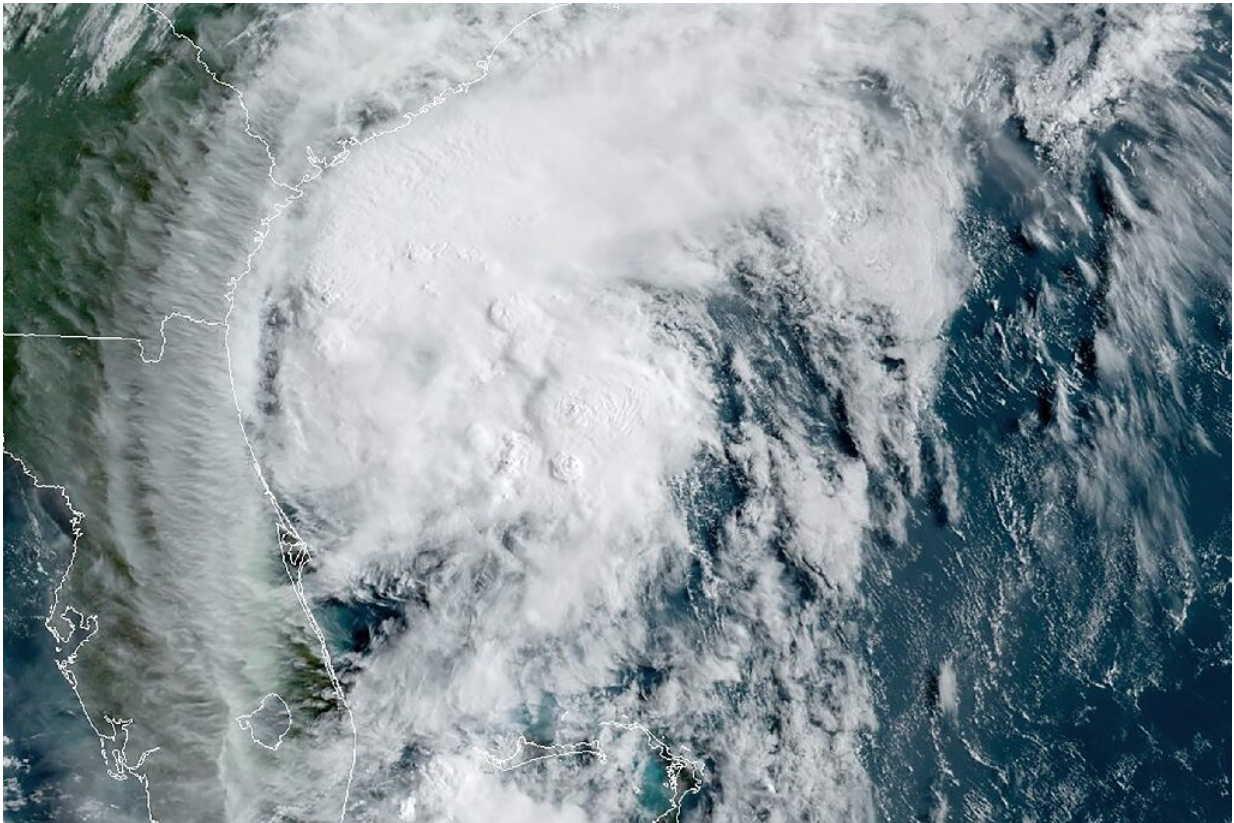
safe place and never drive through flooded roadways.

"But this time, pack your masks and hand sanitizers in your kit and remember to social distance."

Up to 150 National Guard soldiers have been activated to help prepare for the storm and assist in the aftermath if necessary, Cooper said.

Isaias was earlier downgraded from a Category 1 hurricane after brushing past Florida, leaving it relatively unscathed.

Some coronavirus testing centers—many housed in tents—were closed last week in the Sunshine State as the storm approached.



Tropical storm Isaias off the US southeast coast in the Atlantic Ocean



The Dominican Republic's Magua river overflowed its banks

They have now begun to reopen gradually, according to local media.

Florida has emerged as an epicenter of the US virus crisis, which has already claimed nearly 155,000 lives nationwide.

On Sunday, the state reported 77 COVID-19 deaths, down from a record 179 the day before, bringing its death total to 6,920.

The storm earlier dumped torrential rain on the Bahamas, felling trees and flooding streets, before emergency management officials on Sunday gave the "all clear" for the country.

At least one person died in Puerto Rico and the [storm](#) also lashed Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

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