

Genevieve approaches Mexico's Baja as Category 3 hurricane

August 19 2020, by Ignacio Martínez De Jesús

Powerful Hurricane Genevieve began flinging rain at Mexico's Baja California Peninsula on Wednesday and it threatened to bring hurricane-force winds to the tourist region even if its center wasn't likely to hit land.

The Category 3 storm was expected to pass near the resort-dotted tip the peninsula on Wednesday night and Thursday, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center, which warned that only a slight deviation to the right of its track would bring hurricane-force winds onshore.

High surf had already claimed two lives. Police in Cabo San Lucas said a 15-year-girl was trapped by a large wave and an adult tried to save her on Tuesday. Both died.

On Wednesday, rain and strong winds were already being felt. Authorities went door-to-door encouraging people living in low-lying areas to move to shelters.

Los Cabos civil defense director Erick Santillán said Wednesday more than 100 people were in shelters. More than 10,000 families live in flood-prone informal settlements in homes of wood and cardboard in Cabo San Lucas, areas that usually have to be evacuated when storms approach.

Los Cabos Mayor Armida Castro Guzmán said the shelters were staffed with medical personnel and there were locations to isolate COVID-19 positive or suspected cases.

Baja California Sur state officials said 15,000 foreign tourists were in the state, most in the Los Cabos region, which earlier had almost been emptied of visitors by COVID-19 restrictions. Hotel occupancy was at 20%.

The hurricane center said Genevieve had weakened slightly, with maximum sustained winds of 115 mph (185 kph) early Wednesday and was centered about 115 miles (185 kilometers) south of the southern tip of the Baja peninsula. It was moving to the north-northwest at 9 mph (15 kph).

A [hurricane](#) warning was in effect for the peninsula from Los Barriles to Todos Santos—including the Los Cabos resorts.

The storm was expected to spread 3 to 6 inches (7.5 to 15 centimeters) of water over parts of Baja California Sur state as it advances roughly parallel to the coast, bringing the possibility of flash floods and mudslides. Up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) is possible in isolated areas, the Hurricane Center reported.

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