

# Threat to Florida eases as Isaias is slated to remain tropical storm

August 2 2020, by Leila MacOr

---



Storm clouds are seen over Miami as Isaias approaches

Isaias neared the Florida coast Sunday threatening to bring strong winds, flash flooding and storm surges but was no longer expected to regain hurricane strength.

Isaias, downgraded from a category 1 hurricane, was packing sustained winds of 65 miles (105 kilometers) per hour on Sunday morning as it moved slowly toward Florida's southeast, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

"Little change in strength is expected during the next couple of days," it said.

The Miami-based NHC said the center of Isaias was expected to move "near or over the east coast of Florida today through late tonight," before moving on Monday and Tuesday off the Georgia coast and into the southern mid-Atlantic.

The [storm](#) earlier dumped torrential rain on the Bahamas and claimed at least one life in Puerto Rico.

Florida's coast was experiencing heavy gusts of wind early Sunday, and [storm surges](#) of up to four feet (1.2 meters) were still expected on Florida's northern coast, around Jacksonville.

President Donald Trump declared an emergency ahead of the storm's arrival to free up federal funds.

Governor Ron DeSantis warned Floridians late Saturday to brace for the storm, adding that Palm Beach county had issued a voluntary evacuation order.



A woman prepares sand bags for the residents of Palmetto Bay near Miami as Florida prepares for the impact of Isaias

As the state battened down, it was also battling its coronavirus outbreak, which has complicated preparations.

Florida has the second highest number of cases of all states except California—which has double its population.

On Saturday, Florida reported 179 deaths—a new state record that pushed its virus death toll to 6,843.

The storm has had an impact beyond earth too, with NASA closely monitoring it before finally deciding that the SpaceX Crew Dragon craft

could safely bring two astronauts back from the International Space Station for a splashdown on Sunday afternoon in the Gulf of Mexico—hundreds of miles west of Isaias's track.

"The teams are working really hard, especially with the dynamics of the weather over the next few days around Florida," Doug Hurley, one of the astronauts, said in a farewell ceremony on board the ISS.

## 'Hunker down'

Florida residents had rushed at week's end to stock up on essentials as the storm approached.



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis says his state is prepared for the arrival of Isaias

Jason Woodall, 44, was boarding up the Miami Beach store where he works, while others nearby piled sandbags.

"You always got to be prepared, just in case, because you never know," he said.

Governor DeSantis said that with the state's high number of virus cases, it's better to "just hunker down rather than sending people to the road."

Still, the storm could harm efforts to contain the pandemic.

"Once we resume testing, it's very possible we will have a surge again," Miami Mayor Francis Suarez told CNN on Sunday.

Florida's coronavirus testing centers were closed Thursday and will not reopen until they get the all-clear after the storm.

The state's emergency management division explained that the centers are housed in tents and could not withstand the high winds.

## **Flooded houses, downed trees**

Isaias unleashed destruction in Puerto Rico, downing trees and electric lines and inundating houses as it cut a path through the island on Thursday.



The Dominican Republic's Magua river overflowed its banks

Authorities there said Saturday they had recovered the body of a 56-year-old woman whose car had been swept away by storm waters.

In the Bahamas, the deputy director of the country's meteorology department, Jeffrey Simmons, told The Nassau Guardian "the worst part" of the storm came to New Providence, the most populous island, early Saturday.

Images on social media showed flooded streets and downed trees, while shelters were mostly empty.

It is the archipelago's first hurricane since Dorian, a Category 5 storm last year that devastated two islands, pummeling them for three days.

And in the Dominican Republic, people were cleaning up after the Magua river burst its banks.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Threat to Florida eases as Isaias is slated to remain tropical storm (2020, August 2)  
retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2020-08-threat-florida-eases-isaias-slated.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.