

# Hurricane Delta weakens as it heads towards Mexico

October 7 2020, by Yussel Gonzalez

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Tourists are evacuated from their hotel in Puerto Morelos in Mexico in preparation for the arrival of Hurricane Delta

Hurricane Delta lost strength Wednesday as it churned towards Mexico's Caribbean coast, where thousands of tourists hunkered down in

emergency shelters in a string of major beach resorts.

The hurricane was downgraded to Category 3 as it approached the Yucatan Peninsula, but still threatened to bring strong winds and a "life-threatening" storm surge, the US National Hurricane Center said.

On Tuesday Delta had intensified to an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm, according to the Miami-based center.

The hurricane was packing maximum sustained winds of 115 miles (185 kilometers) per hour at 0900 GMT Wednesday.

It was located about 35 miles northeast of the holiday island of Cozumel, just off the Yucatan Peninsula, where the weather was "quickly deteriorating," the NHC reported.

"Little change in strength is expected before the center reaches the coast of the Yucatan peninsula during the next few hours," it said.

Mexico's Riviera Maya coast is home to major tourist resort towns including Cancun, although the number of visitors has plummeted because of the coronavirus pandemic.

By nightfall, Cancun's streets were mostly empty, with shops closed and windows covered by wooden sheets or crossed with adhesive tape to try to prevent them from shattering, according to AFP reporters.

"Although we've been living in Cancun for five years, it's our first hurricane, and the truth is that we're very nervous," said Ana Gabriela Gaeta.

# Hurricanes

## Saffir-Simpson scale

← CATEGORY

**1** Winds of **119**  
to **153 kph**

**Dangerous:**

Damage to poorly constructed homes, tree branches, power lines



**2** **154 - 177 kph**

**Very dangerous:**

Damage to roofs, windows, walls. Shallow-rooted trees blown down. Severe power outages



**3** **178 - 208 kph**

**Devastating:**

Damage to building structures. Many trees uprooted. Flooding near coast. Power and water shortages



**4** **209 - 251 kph**

**Catastrophic:**

Roofs and walls collapse. Most trees and power lines destroyed. Flooding. Areas up to 10 km from coast evacuated



**5** **252 or higher**

**Utterly catastrophic:**

Buildings destroyed, roofs torn off. Floods. Areas up to 16 km from coast evacuated



Source: NHC

AFP 

The five categories in the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale

## **Shelters sanitized**

More than 40,000 tourists in Cancun and neighboring resorts were evacuated, the head of the area's hotel association, Roberto Citron, told AFP.

Most were Mexicans, but they also included foreigners, notably from the United States.

In Cancun alone, more than 160 shelters were set up.

The authorities said the emergency shelters had been sanitized to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, which has killed more than 81,000 people in Mexico and battered the key tourism industry.

"To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the same measures have been taken in the shelters as in hotels, such as the use of gel and face masks," said Cintron.

Maria Alexandra Gonzalez, a 34-year-old tourist from Costa Rica, boarded a bus with a large suitcase and a hat that she never used due to the relentless rain.





Hurricane Delta intensified into a Category 4 storm in the Caribbean and was headed towards Mexico

"We've not had much sun. It's a pity. We haven't been able to go out to see other places," she said.

Soldiers wearing masks and face shields were seen preparing to deploy for relief efforts.

"The order has been given to mobilize up to 5,000 troops with all the necessary equipment to protect the population," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador told reporters.



Mexican troops prepare to deploy in preparation for the arrival of Hurricane Delta

## Airports closed

The Cancun and Cozumel airports were ordered to close, and non-essential activities in the state of Quintana Roo were suspended.

People living in the area stocked up on food, drinking water and wooden boards to protect their homes as the storm approached.

"We're rushing to get wood for the windows. We only learned this morning that the hurricane was coming here," said Laura Mendez, a



54-year-old in Cancun.

Fishermen hauled their boats ashore to prevent them being swept away.



Cancun residents buy boards to protect their homes as Hurricane Delta barrels towards southeast Mexico

Delta is forecast to bring heavy rainfall and floods to parts of the southeastern United States later this week, according to the NHC.

Delta is the 26th named storm of an unusually active Atlantic hurricane season.

Over the weekend, six people died and thousands were forced from their homes as Tropical Storm Gamma triggered floods and landslides in southeastern Mexico.

In September, meteorologists were forced to break out the Greek alphabet to name Atlantic storms for only the second time ever, after the 2020 hurricane season blew through their usual list, ending on Tropical Storm Wilfred.

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