

Hurricane Grace leaves at least 8 dead in Mexico

August 21 2021, by Ignacio Carvajal



A man walks in a flooded street due to heavy rains caused by Hurricane Grace in Tecolutla in eastern Mexico.

Hurricane Grace left at least eight people dead as it tore through eastern Mexico Saturday, causing flooding, power blackouts and damage to

homes before gradually losing strength over mountains.

The storm made landfall in Mexico for a second time during the night near Tecolutla in Veracruz state as a major Category Three storm, triggering warnings of mudslides and significant floods.

The streets of Tecolutla, home to about 24,000 people, were littered with fallen trees, signs and roof panels.

Esteban Dominguez's beachside restaurant was reduced to rubble.

"It was many years' effort," he said.

"Over there was my house, but it's destroyed. I'm left with no roof or furniture," he told AFP.

In the Veracruz state capital, Xalapa, streets were turned into muddy brown rivers. Many homes in the region were left without electricity after winds that clocked 125 miles (200 kilometers) per hour.

"Unfortunately, we have seven deaths" in Xalapa and one more in the city of Poza Rica, including minors, Veracruz Governor Cuitlahuac Garcia told a news conference.

Flooding was also reported in parts of neighboring Tamaulipas state, while in Puebla in central Mexico trees were toppled and buildings suffered minor damage.

Grace weakened to a [tropical storm](#) as it churned inland, clocking maximum sustained winds of 45 miles per hour, according to the US National Hurricane Center (NHC).

At 1800 GMT, the storm was located 35 miles northwest of Mexico

City, which was drenched by heavy rain, and moving west at 13 mph, forecasters said.



The storm toppled trees and damaged homes.

'Seek refuge'

Grace was "weakening rapidly over land but still causing very [heavy rains](#) and flooding over portions of east-central Mexico," the NHC said.

The storm was forecast to weaken to a tropical depression and dissipate by early Sunday, it said.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador had urged residents living in places considered to be at risk to "seek refuge in high places with relatives and in shelters."

Nearly 8,000 civil defense members, soldiers and electricity board workers were ready to tackle the aftermath of the storm, he said on Friday night.

Authorities in Veracruz state said they had prepared 200 storm shelters and urged residents to hunker down in safe places.

Veracruz Governor Garcia warned of the risk of flooding and mudslides as the storm dumped heavy rain on the mountainous region.

Authorities closed most highways in Veracruz, which is crossed by numerous rivers.



A lifeguard watches waves crash on the shore in Boca del Rio in Mexico's eastern state of Veracruz as Hurricane Grace nears.



Intense wind and rain caused some damage to structures on the beach in the resort city of Cancun.

Fishermen affected

In preparation for the storm, workers along the coast boarded up windows to protect stores, fishermen brought their boats ashore and residents secured their homes after stocking up on canned food and water.

"We will spend many days without fishing—almost a week," said Isabel Pastrana Vazquez, head of Veracruz's federation of fisheries

cooperatives.

"About 35,000 fishermen will be affected because we can't go out. We're going to have a swell and rain," he said.

The hurricane had already lashed Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, where more than 6,000 tourists and residents were evacuated to storm shelters earlier in the week across the southeastern state of Quintana Roo.

The [storm](#) first struck on Thursday near the town of Tulum, famed for its Mayan temples, drenching a string of Caribbean beach resorts.

The hurricane passed the Riviera Maya coastline without any loss of life, according to Quintana Roo Governor Carlos Joaquin.

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