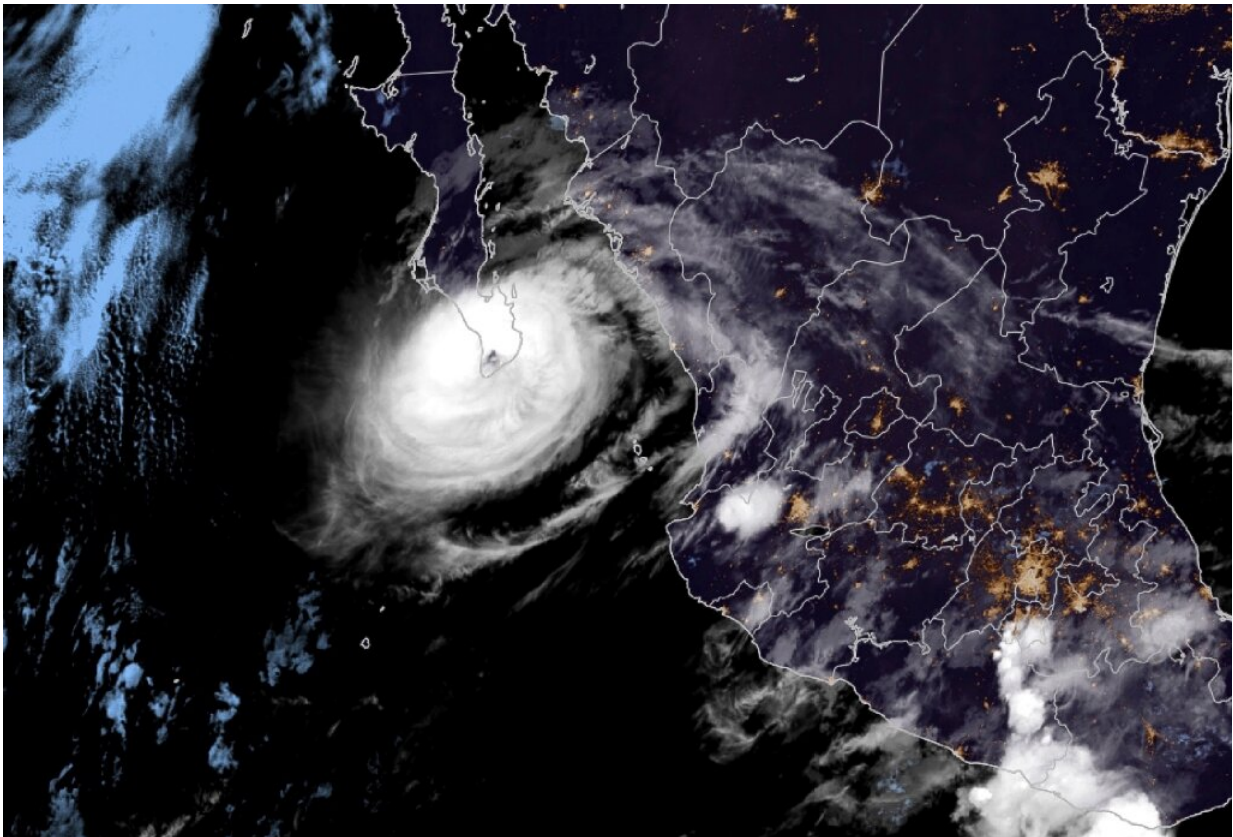


Storm Olaf drenches Mexico's Baja California

September 11 2021



Hurricane Olaf has weakened to a Category One storm.

Tropical storm Olaf swept across Mexico's Baja California peninsula on Friday, bringing strong winds and heavy rain to the major beach resorts of Los Cabos before losing its hurricane force.

Olaf made landfall near the city of San Jose del Cabo late Thursday as a Category Two hurricane packing maximum winds of 100 miles (160 kilometers) per hour, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

It weakened over land and lost its hurricane status as winds dropped to 70 mph, it reported.

A public hospital in Los Cabos, one of Mexico's top tourist destinations, was evacuated due to the risk of flooding, authorities said.

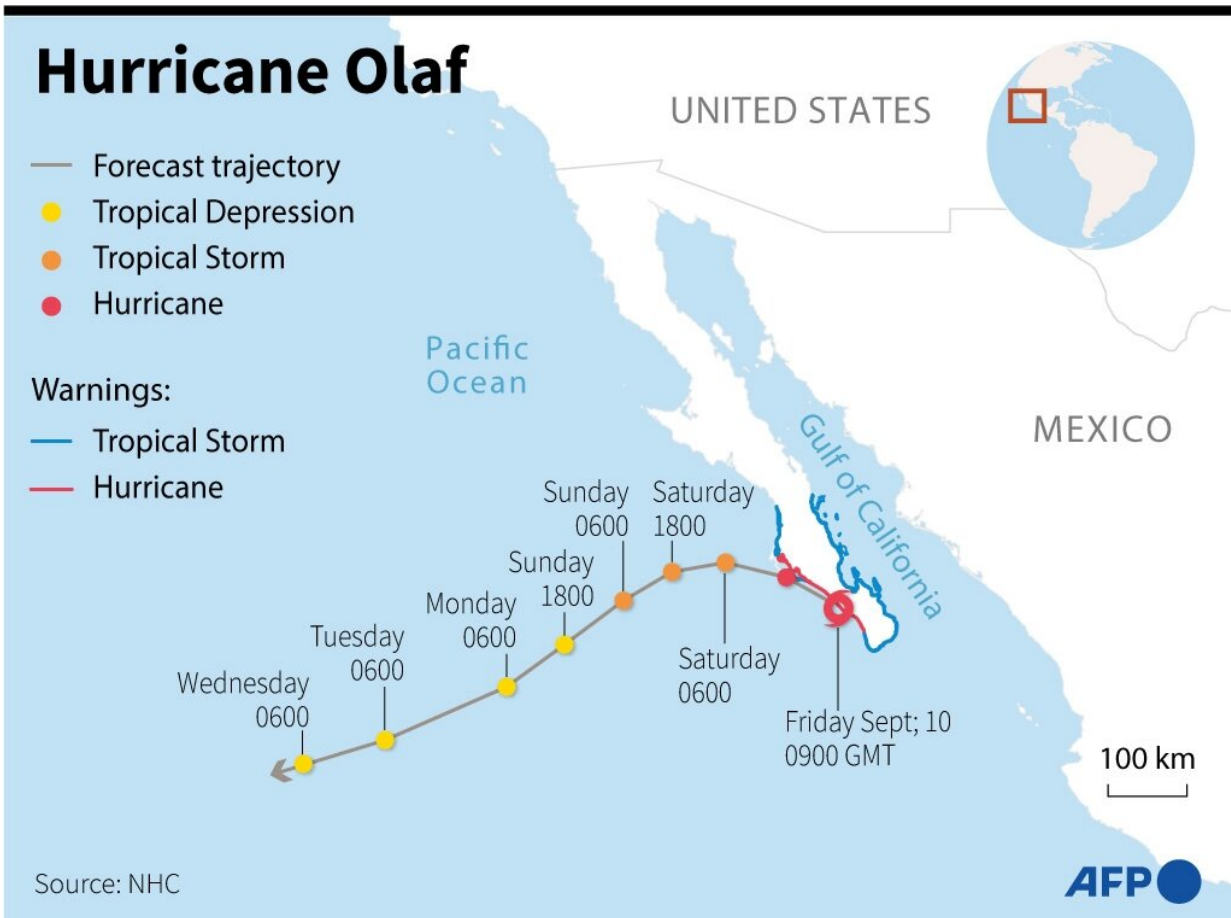
But there were no immediate reports of injuries or major damage, and a hurricane warning was downgraded to a tropical storm warning for coastline from Todos Santos to Cabo San Lazaro.

A dangerous storm surge was expected to be accompanied by large and damaging waves near the coast, the NHC said, warning that heavy rainfall may trigger "significant and life-threatening flash flooding and mudslides."

Authorities set up storm shelters and school children in the state of Baja California Sur were told to stay home on Friday.

Ports were closed for smaller boats and flights were cancelled at the Los Cabos and La Paz airports.

Olaf also brought heavy rainfall on the northwestern mainland that could cause landslides, overflowing rivers and flooding, Mexico's meteorological service said.



Map showing the forecast trajectory of Hurricane Olaf near Mexico's Baja California peninsula.

The storm was forecast to weaken further and head west back out over the Pacific by Friday night.

Mexico is regularly lashed by tropical storms.

Last month a Category 3 hurricane named Grace left 11 people dead after hitting eastern Mexico.

Storm Olaf came as Mexico recovers from a 7.1-magnitude earthquake

and major flooding elsewhere in the disaster-prone country.

Fourteen patients at a hospital in the town of Tula in the central state of Hidalgo died this week after flooding disrupted the power supply and life-sustaining oxygen treatment.

Tens of thousands of residents were affected after a river in the town burst its banks, forcing people to leave their homes.

"From one moment to the next, everything got out of control," said Jenny Casillas, a housewife in her 40s.

Then came the earthquake that left at least one person dead on Tuesday in the southern state of Guerrero, damaged buildings and was felt hundreds of kilometers away including in Tula.

"It will be difficult for us to climb out of this situation," said Marisela Maya, 31, who works at a clinic in the town.

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