

Cuba issues cyclone alert as Hurricane Ian nears

September 26 2022, by Leticia PINEDA



People pull small boats out of Havana Bay on September 26, 2022, as Cuba is expected to bear the brunt of Hurricane Ian.

Cuba on Monday declared a cyclone alert in its six most western provinces as fast-approaching Hurricane Ian strengthened rapidly, with

Florida also ramping up preparations ahead of a possible hit.

Authorities in Havana said they were ready to evacuate those from the most affected areas while supplying fresh drinking water and medical services.

"Given the continuing deterioration of the weather conditions... it was decided to establish from 0800 (1200 GMT) the Cyclone Alert Phase," said the Civil Defense Staff on [state media](#).

The US National Hurricane Center (NHC) warned Ian was expected to pass near the Cayman Islands and then over western Cuba late Monday and early Tuesday.

"Rapid strengthening is expected during the next day or so, and Ian is forecast to become a [major hurricane](#)," it added, with current maximum sustained winds of 80 miles (130 kilometers) per hour.

Cuba's Insmet meteorology institute said Ian was advancing at a speed of 22 kilometers per hour.

The six provinces put on alert are Pinar del Rio, Artemisa, La Habana, Mayabeque, Cienfuegos and Isla de la Juventud.

'Huge storm surge' expected

In Florida, Tampa city was under a hurricane watch , and state Governor Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency in all 67 counties as officials scrambled to prepare for the storm's forecast landing on late Wednesday or Thursday.



People in the US state of Florida were preparing for the storm's imminent arrival.

Ian "will bring [heavy rains](#), [strong winds](#), flash flooding, [storm surge](#), along with isolated tornado activity along Florida's Gulf Coast," DeSantis said in a press conference in Tallahassee on Monday.

He warned people to prepare for power cuts.

"Even if the eye of the storm doesn't hit your region, you're going to have really significant winds, it's going to knock over trees, it's going to cause interruptions," DeSantis said, warning of likely flooding.

The governor urged residents to stock up on food, water, medicine and

fuel, and he activated 7,000 National Guard members to help with the effort.

Authorities in several Florida municipalities, including Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, started distributing free sandbags to residents to help protect their homes from the risk of flooding.

President Joe Biden approved emergency aid to 24 counties in Florida through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

NASA said it was rolling back its Artemis 1 rocket due to blast off to the Moon into its storage hangar at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida due to the hurricane.



Damage caused by Hurricane Fiona in Newfoundland and Labrador province, Canada.

Fiona's wake

The Caribbean and parts of eastern Canada are still counting the cost of powerful storm Fiona, which tore through last week, claiming several lives.

When it arrived in eastern Canada, the storm packed intense winds of 80 miles per hour, bringing torrential rain and waves of up to 40 feet (12 meters).

Canadian authorities have confirmed two deaths caused when Fiona barreled into Nova Scotia and Newfoundland as a post-tropical cyclone early Saturday.

Prince Edward Island authorities confirmed the death of one person while officials in Newfoundland said they found the body of a 73-year-old woman believed to have been swept from her home. She was apparently sheltering in her basement when waves broke through.

"The devastation is immense," Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston told reporters. "The magnitude of the storm is incredible."

Storm surges swept at least 20 homes into the sea in the town of Channel-Port aux Basques, on the southwestern tip of Newfoundland.

Around 200 residents had been evacuated before the storm hit.

"Some people have lost everything, and I mean everything," Button told

CBC News.

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