

Category 5 Hurricane Beryl kills 5, hurtles towards Jamaica

July 2 2024, by Ivan SHAW



People visit a pier during a high tide after the passage of Hurricane Beryl in Oistins near Bridgetown, Barbados on July 1, 2024.

Hurricane Beryl was hurtling towards Jamaica Tuesday as a monster Category 5 storm, after killing at least five people and causing

widespread destruction in a deadly sweep across the southeastern Caribbean.

Though expected to weaken slightly later Tuesday, the [hurricane](#) is still on track to slam into Jamaica on Wednesday as a "near-major" storm, bringing life-threatening winds, [storm surge](#), rain and flash flooding, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) warned.

Beryl has already razed parts of the southeastern Caribbean as a Category 4 storm, killing at least three people in Grenada, one in St Vincent and the Grenadines, and one in Venezuela, officials said.

The Prime Minister of Grenada, Dickon Mitchell, said the island of Carriacou—which the NHC said took a direct hit from the storm—has been all but cut off, with houses, telecommunications and fuel facilities there flattened by 150 miles (90 kilometers) per hour winds.

"We've had virtually no communication with Carriacou in the last 12 hours except briefly this morning by satellite phone," he told a news conference.

The 13.5-square mile (35-square kilometer) island is home to around 9,000 people. At least two people there died, Mitchell said, with a third killed on the main island of Grenada when a tree fell on a house.

The family of UN climate chief Simon Stiell is among the residents of Carriacou. His office said his parents' property was damaged.

Some 90 percent of the homes along with the airport on Union Island, in St Vincent, have also been damaged or destroyed, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves said. The three-square mile island has a population of around 3,000.

Gonsalves said the storm also killed one person on another island, Bequia.



Damaged fishing boats pile up against each other after Hurricane Beryl at the Bridgetown Fish Market, Bridgetown, Barbados on July 1, 2024.

Beryl "has left in its wake immense destruction, pain and suffering," he said in a Facebook video late Monday.

One man also died when swept away by a flooded river in the state of Sucre on Venezuela's northeastern coast, officials there said.

Barbados appeared to have been spared the worst but was still hit with

[high winds](#) and pelting rain, although officials reported no injuries so far.

Martinique was also largely spared, with damage to boats and some flooding in downtown Fort-de-France.

'Alarming precedent'

Experts say it is extremely rare for such a powerful storm to form this early in the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from early June to late November.

Beryl is the first hurricane since NHC records began to reach the Category 4 level in June, and the earliest to reach Category 5 in July.

A Category 3 or higher on the Saffir-Simpson scale is considered a major hurricane.

Oceans are the main drivers of hurricanes, and there are many factors that go into their formation and intensity—but heat is a significant one.



A boat ended up in a tree after the passage of Hurricane Beryl in Oistins gardens, Christ Church, Barbados on July 1, 2024.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said Beryl "sets an alarming precedent for what is expected to be a very active hurricane season."

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said in late May that it expects this year to be an "extraordinary" hurricane season, with up to seven storms of Category 3 or higher.

The agency also cited warm Atlantic Ocean temperatures and conditions related to the weather phenomenon La Niña in the Pacific for the expected increase in storms.

Climate crisis 'chief culprit'

Stiell, the UN climate chief, said [climate change](#) was "pushing disasters to record-breaking new levels of destruction".

"Disasters on a scale that used to be the stuff of science fiction are becoming meteorological facts, and the climate crisis is the chief culprit," he said Monday.

Beryl had maximum sustained winds of 165 miles (270 kilometers) per hour as it headed towards Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, the NHC said in its latest update from 1200 GMT.

The storm is moving rapidly across the Caribbean Sea at 22 miles (35 kilometers) per hour, forecast to pass near Jamaica on Wednesday and the Cayman Islands by Thursday.

Tropical storm warnings have also been issued for the southern coasts of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Hurricane force winds extend some 40 miles (65 kilometers) from the eye of the storm, the NHC said.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: Category 5 Hurricane Beryl kills 5, hurtles towards Jamaica (2024, July 2) retrieved 21 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-07-category-hurricane-beryl-hurtles-jamaica.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.