

Isaias lashes US east coast with fierce winds, heavy rain

4 August 2020, by Logan Cyrus



Large surf is swirled by the wind and captured by a long exposure, while a person stands on the shore as Hurricane Isaias approaches North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Hurricane Isaias slammed into North Carolina bringing life-threatening storm surges and leaving more than 350,000 homes without power, as the US eastern seaboard battered down for flash floods and destructive winds.

Packing sustained winds of 85 miles per hour (around 140 kilometers per hour), the Category 1 hurricane made landfall in the southern part of the state on Monday just before midnight (0400 GMT), the National Hurricane Center said.

Seawater flowed into streets on the border between the Carolinas, leaving locals to wade through the flooded areas as rain and strong winds whipped the palm trees.

Three hours after reaching the coast, Isaias was downgraded to a Tropical Storm, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said Tuesday.

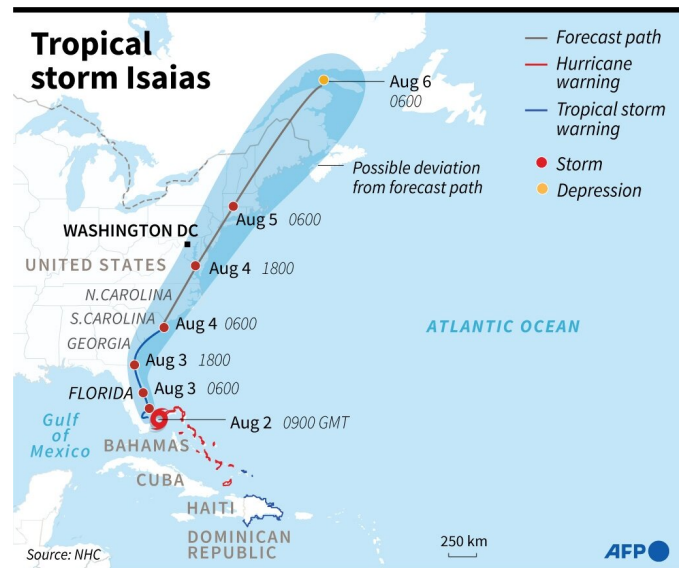
It is forecast to track northeast, with gusts reaching

hurricane force on the mid-Atlantic coast Tuesday, which the NHC said could down trees and cause more blackouts.

Heavy rainfall and flash flooding is expected in Washington, Baltimore and other parts of the northeast coast on Tuesday.

Tornadoes have occurred in North Carolina the NHC said, where state governor Roy Cooper said National Guard soldiers and the Coast Guard were standing by.

Utility companies said Tuesday more than 350,000 outages have occurred across the state.



Forecast path of tropical storm Isaias

Local authorities reported a number of fires in structures on the south coast and warned people whose houses are flooded to turn off the mains electricity—while not standing in the water.

Residents in flood-prone areas "should take all necessary actions to protect life and property from rising water and the potential for other dangerous conditions," the National Hurricane Center said.

"Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion."

'Pack your masks'

President Donald Trump announced earlier Monday he had issued emergency declarations for Florida and both Carolinas, freeing up federal funds.

"Everyone needs to remain vigilant," he warned during a news conference.

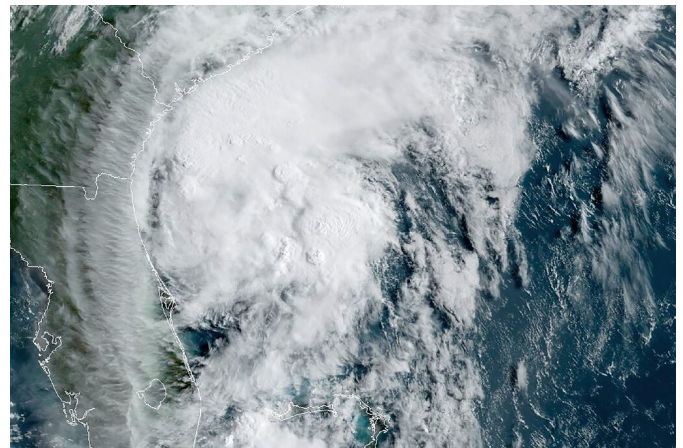
New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy declared a statewide state of emergency ahead of Isaias's arrival, warning residents to stay off the roads in stormy conditions.



Workers set up temporary plastic flood barriers and sandbags known as 'Tiger Dams' in lower Manhattan to protect the area from flooding as tropical storm Isaias approaches New York City on August 3, 2020



Coastal areas in Southern Carolina were underwater as the hurricane hit



Tropical storm Isaias off the US southeast coast in the Atlantic Ocean

The Carolinas have seen a recent surge in coronavirus cases as the US struggles to curb the spread of the illness.

North Carolina governor Roy Cooper said Monday shelters are open and will screen people for COVID-19 symptoms—anyone infected will be sent for isolation out of danger.

"I know that Carolinians have had to dig deep in

recent months to tap into our strength and resilience during the pandemic and that hasn't been easy," he said.

"But with this storm on the way, we have to dig a little deeper. Let's keep each other safe from the wind and water, as well as from the virus."

The storm earlier dumped torrential rain on the Bahamas, felling trees and flooding streets, before emergency management officials on Sunday gave the all-clear.

At least one person died in Puerto Rico and the storm also lashed Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

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