

Beat: News

Tropical Storm Dolly forms in the Gulf of Mexico, heads for Mexico

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USPA News - A broad area of low pressure over the southern Gulf of Mexico has become better organized and strengthened into a tropical storm early on Tuesday, prompting a tropical storm warning for a portion of Mexico's northeastern coast, U.S. forecasters said. Forecasters at the National Hurricane Center (NHC) have been following the system since Friday afternoon when it emerged as a large area of disorganized cloudiness and thunderstorms, associated with a tropical wave, over the central Caribbean Sea.

It moved over the Yucatan peninsula on Sunday as it became better organized, which continued throughout Monday. NHC senior hurricane specialist Stacy Stewart said a U.S. Air Force Reserve reconnaissance aircraft investigated the system early Tuesday morning and found the cyclone had strengthened further. "Based on these wind data, the intensity has been increased to 40 knots (46 miles/74 kilometers per hour), making the cyclone the fourth tropical storm of the 2014 Atlantic hurricane season," he said. As of 4 a.m. CDT (0900 GMT), the center of Dolly was located over the Bay of Campeche about 200 miles (320 kilometers) east of Tampico, a port city in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. It is moving northwest at a speed near 13 miles (20 kilometers) per hour, with a turn toward the west-northwest expected by Tuesday afternoon. "The tropical storm is expected to gradually turn more toward the west-northwest as Dolly skirts along the southern periphery of a strong mid-level ridge that is located across most of the Gulf of Mexico and the southeastern United States," Stewart said. "Landfall along the northeastern coast of Mexico is expected in about 24 hours, followed by dissipation in 48 hours over the rugged terrain of the Sierra Madre Oriental mountains." The news prompted authorities to issue a tropical storm warning from Tuxpan to Barra El Mezquital. "Dolly is expected to produce rainfall amounts of 3 to 6 inches (7.6 to 15.2 centimeters) with isolated maximum amounts of 10 inches (25.4 centimeters) across southern Tamaulipas, northern Veracruz, and eastern San Luis Potosi, Mexico, through Wednesday evening," Stewart explained. "This rainfall could cause life-threatening flash floods and mudslides in areas of mountainous terrain." Dolly is the fourth tropical cyclone of the Atlantic hurricane season, which officially began on May 15. According to a forecast released in late May, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is expecting a below-normal hurricane season in the Atlantic this year. The outlook calls for 8 to 13 named storms, with 3 to 6 becoming hurricanes and one or two of those expected to become a major hurricane (category 3 or higher). Based on the period from 1981 to 2010, an average Atlantic hurricane season produces 12 named storms, with 6 becoming hurricanes and 3 becoming major hurricanes. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30, with peak activity between August and October.

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