

# Extremely Dangerous Hurricane Nears U.S. Coast



This enhanced satellite image provided by NOAA shows Hurricane Florence, third from right, in the Atlantic Ocean on Sunday, Sept. 11, 2018.

WILMINGTON, N.C. (Reuters) — Beach communities in North and South Carolina emptied out on Wednesday as Hurricane Florence threatened to unleash pounding surf and potentially deadly flooding as the most powerful storm to make a direct hit on the states in decades.

Florence had maximum sustained winds of 130 miles per hour (215 km per hour) and was on a trajectory that showed its center most likely to strike the southern coast of North Carolina by Friday, the National Hurricane Center said.

Updated NHC forecasts showed

the storm lingering near the coast, bringing days of heavy rains that could bring intense inland flooding from South Carolina, where some areas could see as much as 40 inches (1m) of rain, to Virginia.

"This storm is big and it's vicious," North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper said on NBC's "Today" Show on Wednesday. "Flooding is a significant risk here and often when there is flooding the people who can afford it the least get hit the most."

More than 1 million people have been ordered to evacuate the coastline of the three states, while university campuses, schools and

factories were being shuttered.

The NHC said the first tropical storm-force winds of at least 39 miles per hour (63 kph) would hit the region early on Thursday with the storm's center reaching the coast Friday. At 8 a.m. (1200 GMT) on Wednesday the storm was located about 530 miles (855 km) southeast of Cape Fear, North Carolina.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Twitter warned of the storm's dangers and praised his administration's handling of past hurricanes, rejecting criticism for its response to Hurricane Maria last year in Puerto Rico. Some 3,000 people died in the aftermath of that storm.

"Hurricane Florence is looking even bigger than anticipated," Trump said. "We got A Pluses for our recent hurricane work in Texas and Florida (and did an unappreciated great job in Puerto Rico, even though an inaccessible island with very poor electricity and a totally incompetent Mayor of San Juan). We are ready for the big one that is coming!"

To hasten evacuations from coastal South Carolina, officials switched traffic patterns so that all major roads led away from shore.

The last hurricane rated a Category 4 on the five-step Saffir-Simpson to plow directly into North Carolina was Hazel in 1954, a devastating storm that killed 19 people.

## Putin Suggests Russia, Japan Sign Peace Treaty



Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during their meeting on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia September 10, 2018.

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (AFP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested Wednesday that Russia and Japan sign a peace treaty this year, ending World War II hostilities "without any preconditions" as a territorial dispute has led to decades of deadlock.

The dispute between Russia and Japan centers on four islands in the strategically-located Kuril chain which the Soviet Union occupied at the end of war in 1945 but are claimed by Japan.

It has kept the two countries from signing a peace accord that would formally end their wartime hostilities.

"We have been trying to solve the territorial dispute for 70 years. We've been holding talks for 70 years," Putin said at an economic forum in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok attended by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

"Shinzo said: 'let's change our approaches.' Let's! Let's conclude a peace agreement, not now but by year's end without any preconditions," Putin said, prompting the audience to break into applause.

Putin's sudden proposal came just two days after he said that the two countries' dispute was unlikely to be settled soon. "It is not a joke," Putin added,

suggesting the two countries commit to solving the territorial dispute in the text of the peace deal.

Putin said the conclusion of such a deal would create a better atmosphere and allow Russia and Japan to "continue to solve all outstanding issues like friends."

"It seems to me that this would facilitate the solution of all problems which we have not been able to solve during the past 70 years."

The Japanese prime minister said the two countries "have a duty to future generations."

"Let us walk together mindful of the questions, 'If we don't do it now, then when?' And 'if we don't do it, then who will?'" Abe said, speaking before Putin. "We are both fully aware that it will not be easy."

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said a treaty with Russia would be signed "after resolving the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands," referring to the disputed territory. Putin and Abe have held numerous meetings over the past few years in a bid to solve the dispute over the islands.

The two countries have launched various economic projects on the islands in areas such as the farming of fish and shellfish, wind-generated energy, and tourism.

## Zimbabwe Declares Emergency After Cholera Outbreak



Patients await treatment at a makeshift cholera clinic in Harare, Zimbabwe, September 11, 2018.

HARARE (Dispatches) — Zimbabwe's police on Wednesday issued a ban on all public gatherings to control the spread of cholera, which has killed 21 people in the capital Harare, a day after the government declared an emergency following the outbreak of the disease.

In a statement, the national police spokeswoman Charity Charamba urged members of the public to take heed of the ban as it would assist in alleviating the spread of cholera, but did not say how long the ban would last.

The main opposition leader Nelson Chamisa had planned to hold a rally on Saturday where he may take a mock presidential oath, three weeks after President Emmerson Mnangagwa was inaugurated following a court decision upholding his disputed election victory.

Chamisa's spokesman Nkululeko Sibanda could not comment immediately.

The opposition leader visited clinics where cholera patients were being treated earlier on Wednesday and called for collaboration between city health officials and the

government. The Minister of Health Obadiah Moyo told a meeting of government departments dealing with the outbreak that more than 3,000 people had been infected by cholera and the disease had now spread outside the capital.

This is the biggest cholera outbreak since 2008 when 4,000 people died and more than 40,000 were treated for this disease, according to ministry of health data.

Cholera is a major global health concern: WHO estimates suggest there are up to 4 million cases—and more than 140,000 deaths—each year.

Last year, more than 150,000 cholera cases, and more than 3,000 deaths, were reported in 17 countries in Africa. This year, eight African countries have been dealing with outbreaks.

Algeria recently suffered an outbreak for the first time in more than 20 years. West Africa's Lake Chad Basin, which includes Nigeria, Niger, Mali and Cameroon, has suffered an abnormal spike in cases since late August.

## Juncker Asks EU to Flex Muscle Without U.S.



European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivers a speech during a debate on The State of the European Union at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, September 12, 2018.

STRASBOURG (Reuters) — The European Union should flex its potential strength as a world power as the United States under President Donald Trump pulls back from international engagement, EU chief executive Jean-Claude Juncker said on Wednesday.

In his annual State of the Union address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the European Commission president said that when united, the EU was a force to be reckoned with.

"Whenever Europe speaks as one, we can impose our position on

others," Juncker said.

With the EU still wounded by Britain's imminent withdrawal, rising nationalism elsewhere and feuding over immigration and democratic values with right-wing eastern leaders like Hungary's Viktor Orban, Juncker insisted the bloc was more united than it might seem and could use that to shape the world to its tastes.

As he begins a final year in office that will see Europeans elect a new EU legislature in May, the veteran former premier of Luxembourg noted his successful bid to talk Trump out

of an immediate tariff war in July and highlighted new interest from China in working with Brussels to keep world trade flowing free.

Pointing to questions in many countries over Washington's role as the global economic leader, Juncker also said the euro should be better promoted as a world currency, querying why EU energy imports, for example, are mostly priced in dollars when almost none of them come from the United States.

The Commission wants to complete an EU trade pact with Japan by May, one of several deals that is consolidating the EU at the heart of a web of global agreements on standards as Trump has turned Washington against multilateral obligations.

He also announced the launch of a new trade relationship with Africa. "Africa does not need charity, but a true and balanced partnership," he said, proposing a new alliance that would create 10 million jobs in Africa over five years and help African students and researchers go on exchange programs in Europe.

Juncker also proposed beefing up Europe's defenses against poor Africans heading north by creating a fully Brussels-run European Border and Coast Guard with a full-time strength of 10,000 to help keep back economic migrants whose arrival has fuelled anti-EU nationalism.

## Merkel Blasts Xenophobic Attacks on Refugees

BERLIN (Reuters) — German Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned xenophobic attacks and the use of Nazi slogans in a robust speech to parliament on Wednesday after the most violent far-right demonstrations in decades exposed deep divisions in the country.

Protests of right-wing radicals in the eastern city of Chemnitz two weeks ago after the fatal stabbing of a German blamed on two migrants has reignited a fierce debate about her 2015 decision to let more than a million refugees into Germany.

"There is no excuse or reason for hunting people down, using violence and Nazi slogans, showing hostility

to people who look different, who have a Jewish restaurant, for attacks on police officers," Merkel told the Bundestag lower house of parliament.

"We will not allow whole groups in our society to be excluded on the quiet," she said, adding Jews, Muslims and Christians all belong in German society, adding human dignity was paramount.

She was responding to a passionate speech by the head of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) who said the country's 'domestic peace' was at risk.

"As disgusting as Hitler salutes are, I would like to remind you that the really serious event in Chemnitz

was the bloody deed (committed) by two asylum seekers," said Alexander Gauland.

He accused Merkel of spreading fake news about the demonstrations and supported Hans-Georg Maassen, head of the BfV intelligence agency who is under fire for questioning whether video footage showing gangs hounding migrants were real.

"The truth is, there was no hunting down of people in Chemnitz... The citizens who demonstrated were criminalized," said Gauland. "Mrs. Chancellor, you have nothing more to offer the people of this country than obstinacy, dogmatism and insults. Barricade yourself up in the chancellery away from reality!"



LONDON (Reuters) — A group of about 50 lawmakers in British Prime Minister Theresa May's government who oppose her proposals for a post-Brexit deal with the European Union have met to discuss how and when they could force her out of her job, the BBC reported on Wednesday. The lawmakers, part of the European Research Group (ERG), an anti-EU grouping in May's Conservative party, met on Tuesday night and openly discussed May's future as leader, the BBC said citing an unnamed source. A number at the meeting said they had already submitted letters of no confidence in May, the source told the BBC. Under Conservative rules, a leadership election is triggered if 15 percent of Conservative lawmakers, currently 48, demand a vote of no confidence. The ERG has condemned May's plans for Britain to remain in a free trade zone for goods with the EU after it leaves the bloc in March next year, but has faced criticism itself for failing to suggest a detailed alternative.

CARACAS (Dispatches) — Pro-government supporters have marched against U.S. meddling after reports that American officials met secretly with Venezuelan military officers to discuss plans to oust President Nicolas Maduro. The United States "acknowledges having met at least three times with military coup leaders to carry out a coup," said Diosdado Cabello, speaker of the ruling Constituent Assembly that runs the country. At an event by the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), Cabello also drew a direct connection with the drone explosions on August 4 at a military parade Maduro was leading. "The presidential assassination that was stopped was led by the United States. Is there anyone who has any doubt?" Cabello asked. U.S. officials decided against taking action after the meetings, according to The New York Times. On Twitter, Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said it was "absolutely unacceptable and unjustifiable that U.S. government officials participate in meetings to encourage and promote violent actions of extremists."

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — Officials say Malaysia's prime minister-in-waiting Anwar Ibrahim will contest a by-election that will pave the way for his return to active politics. Lawmaker Danyal Balagopal Abdullah said Wednesday he has resigned as a member of Parliament in Port Dickson, a southern coastal town, to make way for Anwar's comeback. The Election Commission must set a date for by-election within two months. The 70-year-old Anwar is the anointed successor to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, who won a historic national vote in May. Senior party official Saifuddin Nasution says there is no timeframe for Anwar to take over the top job. He says Anwar will focus on parliamentary reforms and will not hold any government position when he returns to Parliament.

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (Reuters) — Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un could visit Russia at any time that was convenient for him. Putin's comments came days after the Kremlin said it had sent Kim Jong Un a letter of invitation to visit Russia.

BRUSSELS (AP) — European authorities are planning to slap internet companies like Google and Facebook with big fines if they don't take down extremist content within one hour. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said in a speech Wednesday that the Commission is proposing the new rules as part of efforts to step up the bloc's security. He said that removing material within an hour is important because it's "the critical window in which the greatest damage is done." The EU's executive body said extremist material "that prepares, incites or glorifies acts of terrorism" must be taken offline. Content would be flagged up by national authorities, who would issue removal orders to the internet companies hosting it. Those companies would be given one hour to delete it.

ROME (Thomson Reuters Foundation) — World hunger rose in 2017 for a third consecutive year, fueled by conflict and climate change, the United Nations warned, jeopardizing a global goal to end the scourge by 2030. Hunger appears to be increasing in almost all of Africa and in South America, with 821 million people - one in nine - going hungry in 2017, according to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018 report. Meanwhile, 672 million adults - more than one in eight - are now obese, up from 600 million in 2014. "Without increased efforts, there is a risk of falling far short of achieving the SDG target of hunger eradication by 2030," the report said, referring to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by member nations in 2015. It was the third year in a row that global hunger levels have increased, following a decade of declines.