

= Hurricane Olivia (1975) =

Hurricane Olivia was considered the worst hurricane to hit Mazatlán , Sinaloa since 1943 , in addition to being the strongest landfalling and costliest hurricane of the 1975 Pacific hurricane season . Olivia formed on October 22 to the south of Mexico , quickly intensifying into a tropical storm . The storm moved northwestward initially , followed by a northeast turn . On October 23 , Olivia attained hurricane status , and the next day reached Category 3 intensity on the Saffir @-@ Simpson scale just before moving ashore Mazatlán in northwest Mexico . Olivia destroyed 7 @,@ 000 houses in the region , leaving 30 @,@ 000 people homeless , and damage totaled \$ 20 million (1975 USD , \$ 88 million 2016 USD) . The hurricane killed 30 people , 20 of them from drowning in shrimp boats .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of Olivia were from an extended area of convection , or thunderstorm activity , that persisted southwest of Mexico in late October . Following the development of a circulation , the system formed into a tropical depression early on October 22 about 430 mi (690 km) southwest of Manzanillo , Colima . The depression quickly intensified into Tropical Storm Olivia as it tracked northwestward , although further strengthening was slowed . The circulation became much better defined on October 23 and after Olivia turned northeastward , it attained hurricane status that evening .

After reaching hurricane status , Olivia accelerated to the north @-@ northeast . Several ships crossed its path , encountering strong winds and rough waves . On October 24 , a Hurricane Hunters flight observed an elliptical eye and winds of 91 mph (146 km / h) . Further intensification occurred , and around 0500 UTC on October 25 Olivia made landfall on Mazatlán , Sinaloa with peak winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) and gusts to 140 mph (230 km / h) ; this made Olivia a major hurricane , or a Category 3 on the Saffir @-@ Simpson scale . It quickly dissipated after moving ashore .

= = Preparations and Impact = =

Prior to Olivia making landfall , the Mexican military evacuated about 50 @,@ 000 people from low @-@ lying areas . Accurate forecasts from satellite and ship data were credited with preventing a significant death toll , although the population did not know of the storm 's approach until a day before landfall . Officials advised ships to return to port for safety , and the threat of the storm canceled a baseball game . As Olivia moved ashore , it produced locally heavy rainfall , peaking at 7 @.@ 28 in (185 mm) in Pueblo Nuevo , Durango . The heaviest rains occurred in a narrow region where the hurricane made landfall , although precipitation of around 1 in (25 mm) reached as far south as Michoacán , 340 mi (550 km) south of the landfall location . Winds in Mazatlán reached 138 mph (222 km / h) .

The combination of strong winds and heavy rainfall destroyed about 7 @,@ 000 homes in Mazatlán and 14 nearby villages , with 10 @,@ 000 houses damaged to some degree . Many of the destroyed homes were poorly built , and the hurricane 's passage left 30 @,@ 000 people homeless ; the storm victims were housed in schools , churches , and other buildings not damaged during the storm . Most buildings in the city were affected , with storm debris covering streets . Across the region , the hurricane cut power and water services , and also disrupted the transportation infrastructure by damaging highways and railroads . The airport was also heavily damaged , with flights suspended into the city . Most windows at the airport were blown @-@ out , and 14 small planes were overturned . The strong winds also downed trees , while heavy rainfall resulted in flooding .

Olivia was considered the worst storm in Mazatlán since a hurricane in 1943 , and following the storm , the city was declared a disaster zone . Near the coastline and in tourist areas , damage reached \$ 4 million (1975 USD , \$ 17 @.@ 6 million 2016 USD) . Across its path , Olivia killed 30

people and left 500 injured , 17 of them severe . Offshore , 20 of the deaths occurred when three shrimp boats were wrecked . The winds damaged a wall at a prison , killing two prisoners and allowing others to escape . Overall damage totaled \$ 20 million (1975 USD , \$ 88 million 2016 USD) .

Olivia is one of only three major hurricanes on record to strike Mazatlán , the others being the 1943 hurricane , as well as another in 1957 ; in addition Hurricane Tico in 1983 came close to striking the city . Reconstruction began immediately , and the Secretariat of National Defense quickly deployed food and water to the storm victims . By a day after the storm 's passage , the Mexican Navy sent two ships worth of relief supplies to Mazatlán , including water , medicine , and rescue equipment . Three days after the storm passed through the region , relief workers began cleaning up the storm debris .