

= Cyclone Alibera =

Cyclone Alibera was the second longest @-@ lasting tropical cyclone on record in the south @-@ west Indian Ocean , with a duration of 22 days . It formed on December 16 , 1989 , well to the northeast of Madagascar . For several days , it meandered southwestward while gradually intensifying . On December 20 , Alibera intensified to tropical cyclone status with 10 ? minute maximum sustained winds of 120 km / h ( 75 mph ) , or the equivalent of a minimal hurricane . That day , the Météo @-@ France office in Réunion ( MFR ) estimated 10 ? minute winds of 140 km / h ( 85 mph ) , while the Joint Typhoon Warning Center ( JTWC ) , an unofficial warning agency for the region , estimated peak 1 ? minute winds of 250 km / h ( 150 mph ) . After drifting erratically for several days , the storm began a steady southwest motion on December 29 as a greatly weakened system . On January 1 , Alibera struck southeastern Madagascar near Mananjary , having re @-@ intensified to just below tropical cyclone status . It weakened over land but again restrengthened upon reaching open waters on January 3 . The storm turned to the southeast , then to the southwest , and finally back to the southeast , dissipating on January 5 .

Early in its duration , Alibera produced gusty winds in the Seychelles . Upon moving ashore in Madagascar , the cyclone lashed coastal cities with heavy rainfall and up to 250 @-@ km / h ( 150 @-@ mph ) wind gusts . In Mananjary , nearly every building was damaged or destroyed , and locals considered it the worst storm since 1925 . Across the region , the cyclone destroyed large areas of crops , thousands of houses , and several roads and bridges . Alibera killed 46 people and left 55 @,@ 346 people homeless . After the storm , the Malagasy government requested for international assistance .

= = Meteorological history = =

The first named storm of the season , Tropical Cyclone Alibera , formed on December 16 about halfway between Tromelin Island and Diego Garcia as a tropical disturbance . It originated from the Intertropical Convergence Zone and initially consisted of a spiral area of thunderstorms . The system moved erratically , first to the southwest , then to the southeast , and later curving back to the west , steered by a ridge to the southeast . On December 18 , the Météo @-@ France office in Réunion ( MFR ) estimated that the system attained winds of 65 km / h ( 40 mph ) , making it a moderate tropical storm . The MFR is the official Regional Specialized Meteorological Center for the basin . As a result , the Mauritius Meteorological Service named the storm Alibera . Also on December 18 , the Joint Typhoon Warning Center ( JTWC ) , a joint United States Navy and Air Force task force issuing cyclone warnings for the region , assessed that the storm had winds equivalent to a minimal hurricane in a post @-@ storm analysis . While the storm was active , however , the JTWC did not begin advisories until the following day .

Alibera quickly intensified , attaining tropical cyclone status on December 20 while southwest of Agaléga . Although the MFR estimated 10 ? minute winds of 140 km / h ( 85 mph ) that day , the JTWC assessed that the storm was vastly stronger , estimating peak 1 ? minute winds of 250 km / h ( 150 mph ) . This is equivalent to a super typhoon , which made Alibera tied for the strongest cyclone in the southern hemisphere that season , along with Cyclone Alex in the Australian basin . On December 21 , Alibera turned sharply to the south and slowly weakened . On the next day , the storm curved to an eastward drift as a downgraded severe tropical storm , its path influenced by ridges to the east and west . It maintained its intensity for the next several days , turning back to the south on December 24 and slowly recurving to the west . However , the movement was erratic , and the storm executed four small loops . Although the MFR had forecasting difficulties during this time , the storm remained far enough to the north of the Mascarene Islands to limit rainfall warnings .

On December 29 , Alibera began a steady track to the southwest after the ridge weakened , and briefly deteriorated to minimal tropical storm status . However , it re @-@ intensified to just shy of tropical cyclone status on January 1 . Shortly thereafter , Alibera made landfall north of Mananjary in southeastern Madagascar , at 3 a.m. local time on New Year 's Day , with 10 ? minute winds of 115 km / h ( 70 mph ) . The storm quickly weakened over land , but again restrengthened upon reaching

the Mozambique Channel on January 3 . This was short lived , as Alibera weakened back to tropical depression status by January 5 . The storm moved to the southeast , turned to the southwest , and finally back to the southeast before dissipating on January 7 , having been swept into the westerlies .

Alibera was the second longest lasting tropical cyclone in the basin since the start of satellite imagery , with a duration of 22 days . Only Cyclone Georgette in 1968 lasted longer at 24 days . After Alibera , the only storm to approach Alibera 's duration was Cyclone Leon ? Eline in 2000 , which lasted 21 days in the basin ( 29 days overall ) .

= = Impact and aftermath = =

Before Alibera affected Madagascar , it produced winds of tropical cyclone force in the Seychelles . On Tromelin Island , Alibera produced sustained winds of 83 km / h ( 52 mph ) with gusts to 124 km / h ( 77 mph ) .

In Mananjary where the cyclone moved ashore , Alibera produced gusts of 250 km / h ( 150 mph ) . There , nearly every building was damaged or destroyed , including hospitals , government offices , and schools . About 80 % of houses were destroyed . The cyclone shut down the city 's water system , disrupted access to the ocean , cut communications , and blocked or damaged most roads . There were 15 deaths in Mananjary alone . The storm damage in Mananjary prevented ships from delivering supplies . Residents in the region considered the storm to be the worst since 1925 .

Elsewhere in southern Madagascar , the cyclone damaged about 70 % of the buildings in Nosy Varika and 15 % of Ivohibe . In the former town , many schools and houses were destroyed , leaving thousands homeless , and 4 @, @ 230 houses were destroyed in Vohipeno . Strong winds damaged walls and roofs in several other towns in Fianarantsoa Province . The offshore island of Île Sainte @-@ Marie sustained heavy damage . Across Fianarantsoa Province , Alibera destroyed 33 @, @ 065 ha ( 81 @, @ 710 acres ) of rice , corn , coffee , bananas , and vegetables , although most of the damage was to the rice crop . The cyclone also wrecked about 10 @, @ 000 ha ( 25 @, @ 000 acres ) of cotton and tobacco fields in Ihosy , and downed many trees along its path . Areas in southeastern Madagascar experienced heavy rainfall , which flooded rivers and canals in Fianarantsoa Province . Across the region , 23 roads were cut or damaged , totaling 19 @. @ 5 km ( 12 @. @ 1 mi ) of roads in need of repairs . This included a 500 m ( 1 @, @ 600 ft ) portion of a mountain road that was destroyed , as well as a damaged section of Route nationale 7 . In Vohipeno , the floods destroyed 13 bridges , and a bridge was damaged in Ifanadiana . The cyclone also cut a portion of the Fianarantsoa @-@ Côte Est railway , thus disrupting regional economic activity . Across Madagascar , Alibera killed 46 people and left 55 @, @ 346 homeless .

On January 18 , the Malagasy government issued an appeal to the international community for assistance . The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator provided \$ 15 @, @ 000 ( USD ) in emergency funding to purchase immediate supplies . The United States sent \$ 20 @, @ 000 to rebuild schools and hospitals . Other countries donated \$ 135 @, @ 000 in supplies or cash , including \$ 82 @, @ 000 from Japan and \$ 23 @, @ 000 from the United Kingdom . In Mananjary , the local government provided 300 kg ( 660 lb ) of rice to affected families , while the national government provided other relief goods to the city after roads were cleared . After the storm , a school in Farafangana housed 900 locals who were left homeless . Existing food supplies were sufficient to feed affected residents after the storm passed .