



- Press Release -

Conclusion of 2015 Hurricane Season

Today Monday 30th November marks the end of 2015 hurricane season. It was a season that saw below average activity. During this year's hurricane season there were 11 named systems. Of these 4 became hurricanes and out of this four, there were two major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5). In a typical season there would be on average 12 named systems, of those twelve, 6 would attain hurricane status and two to three becoming major hurricanes.

	2015 Season	Average or Typical Season
Named Systems	11	12
Hurricanes	4	6
Major Hurricanes (Category 3, 4 and 5)	2	3

The major influence on the below activity was the strong El Niño that developed. This phenomenon which is an abnormal warming of the Pacific Ocean has effects on the global circulation patterns. Historically such events have a dampening effect on tropical cyclone activity in the Atlantic basin as was evident this past hurricane season. The strength of this phenomenon was also evident here at home in Belize. The strong El Niño event prevented even the tropical waves from supporting significant amounts of rainfall as they crossed the Caribbean Sea. This resulted in severe drought in the northern and western sections of the country since these tropical waves are the rain producers during the wet/rainy season here.

However, even though Belize was not threatened by any systems this past hurricane season smaller scale weather systems developed in the Gulf of Honduras and moved across the country the weekend of the 17th and 18th October and dumped some 25 inches over Belize City resulting in widespread flooding of the city. This put an end to some of the rainfall deficits that were being experienced around the country.

Although Belize did not see a threat this past season, citizens are advised not to become complacent thinking that next year's hurricane season will be the same as this past season. It is forecast that the El Niño phenomenon will weaken by March and April 2016. This could create a completely different scenario for the 2016 season as compared with this past season.

We at the National Meteorological Service will continue to work diligently to improve on our products, forecasting skills and services so as to be better able to provide even more timely and accurate tropical cyclone forecasts in addition to the improvements already being made on our other routine services.

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