

Hurricane Dean moving toward Campeche

by UPI

CHETUMAL, Mexico -- Hurricane Dean plowed toward the Bay of Campeche Tuesday, substantially weakened from when it first slammed into Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. U.S. hurricane forecasters said Dean weakened from its category 5 status to a category 3 as it churned westward. Mexican officials lifted the hurricane warning for the eastern Yucatan from the border with Belize to Cancun and from Cancun to Progreso. A tropical storm warning for Belize also was lifted. Hurricane warnings remained in effect along the Gulf Coast from Progreso to Tampico and tropical storm warnings were in effect from Tampico to La Pesca. At 2 p.m. EDT, Dean's center was about 45 miles south-southeast of Campeche and moving west at nearly 18 mph with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph. Hurricane force winds extended outward up to 45 miles, and tropical storm force winds 150 miles. The storm is expected to dump as much as 10 inches of rain over parts of southern and central Mexico, accompanied by possible flash flooding and mudslides. Once over hot, tropical Gulf of Mexico waters, Dean was likely to regain strength and continue westward toward central Mexico, forecast models showed. The storm is blamed for at least nine deaths in the Caribbean in Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia and Dominica.

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