News

Wind whipping Mexico's northern Pacific coast, some streets flooding as Hurricane Polo bears down



People evacuate their homes as Hurricane Polo approaches Puerto San Carlos, Baja California Sur state, Mexico, Monday, Sept. 28, 2026.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDUARO VERDUGO, COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PUERTO SAN CARLOS, Mexico (AP) — Wind whipped Mexico's northern Pacific coast and water began to flood some streets Monday as Hurricane Polo bore down on Baja California Sur, threatening flash floods and mudslides. Meanwhile, Hurricane Nolo could still bring torrential rain to parts of Hawaii even as the storm edged away from the state.

In Puerto San Carlos, a fishing town of about 5,700 people, high tides and pounding waves from Polo were breaching sea barriers as residents worried for their homes in the mostly empty town. Hundreds of people in the region evacuated, hunkering down in nearby shelters in schools and other facilities.

"Civil Protection told those of us here in San Carlos to evacuate because this is a high-risk area. With the current tides, the expected waves and the wind, the earthen barriers they built (to prevent flooding) could give way," Rocío Sánchez, a fisherwoman, said.

Polo barreling toward Baja California peninsula

Polo was a Category 3 storm with top sustained winds of 115 mph (185 kph) Monday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said. Forecasters said it would hit the Mexican mainland after lashing Baja California Sur with heavy rains, and that "life threatening winds and flash floods (were) expected to occur soon." It could bring heavy rain and flooding to parts of the U.S. Southwest later in the week.

Residents of the area were bracing themselves, plagued by the uncertainty of what was to come. Margarita Bobadilla and her family were sheltered in a local school, saying it was safer than weathering the storm in her wooden house.

"Material things can be replaced, but family can't. My children and I decided to come here last night, and now we're waiting to see what happens."

Others lingered in their mostly emptied town of Puerto San Carlos, crossing their fingers the light flooding and powerful winds would be the worst of Polo.

Laura Velázquez, national coordinator of Mexico's Civil Protection Agency, reported that Polo would make landfall later in the afternoon. With Polo approaching Mexico, the Mexican navy said it had personnel ready across the northern Pacific coast and deployed three vessels that could ship aid to coastal communities isolated by the storm. Local authorities along the Baja California Peninsula said they had shelters at the ready.

At a Monday morning news briefing, Velázquez urged residents to stay off the streets and seek shelter if their homes are at risk. She said travel will be suspended in the area where the hurricane was expected to make landfall and that ports across the region would be closed.

At the same time, Tropical Storm Rachel was brewing over Mexico's southwest coast. The hurricane center said Monday that Rachel had maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph) and was located about 225 miles (365 kilometers) south-southwest of Acapulco. No coastal watches or warnings were in effect.

It's been a busy season for Pacific storms

Storm activity in the Pacific has been above average during what is already the peak of hurricane season, according to National Weather Service lead forecaster Bob Oravec. He said that pattern is consistent with El Niño years, when the Pacific often sees more tropical storms and hurricanes.

While Polo is slated to weaken over northern Mexico, tropical weather was also supposed to deal a one-two punch to the U.S. Southwest.

The region has already been saturated by heavy rain over the past months, and regions like New Mexico and Grand Canyon were hit by devastating floods earlier this month. Now, the remnants of Polo are forecast to track east across the region, expected to douse Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Texas with inches of rain.

That's a good chunk of the 8-12 inches the arid area of canyons and rocky expanses with little vegetation usually gets in a year. Such terrain is already conducive to flash flooding, sudden torrents that can sweep down canyons and other low-lying areas with little warning. The new tropical weather adds more risk, said Andrew Mangham, senior service hydrologist for the National Weather Service in Albuquerque.

"We're getting caught up here in a very, very short time," Mangham said. "And that's not really what we want. We want nice rains, you know, all summer long."

In Hawaii, floods and mudslides are still a risk

Nolo, meanwhile, was well southwest of Hawaii and moving away from the Big Island as the weekend drew to a close. Nolo drenched communities in south and southeastern parts of the Big Island over the weekend, prompting some highway closures on Saturday evening and Sunday as rushing water and boulders blocked roadways.

Hawaii National Guard members rescued 19 people from flooding over the weekend, the U.S. National Guard said in a post on Facebook.

Damage assessments are still underway as Nolo continues moving west away from the main Hawaiian islands. National Hurricane Center specialist Elizabeth Adams said Monday that Nolo was closing in on Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument, a marine conservation area northwest of the islands.

"We are expecting conditions to rapidly deteriorate near that national monument," she said.

Thousands of households and businesses had been without power on Maui, but by Monday afternoon, most of their power had been restored, according to poweroutage.us. The majority of the outages had been related to storm damage, according to statements from Hawaiian Electric.

Hawaii residents were still recovering from several other natural events this year, including spring Kona low storms, a May earthquake, Hurricane Lala in August and Hurricane Lowell in September. Those events affected more than 1,290 homes, according to the state, and caused nearly $700 million in damage and recovery costs.



Fire Captain Lui Sales of the Hawaii Fire Department looks for residents to help as rainwater from nearby Hurricane Nolo flood a section of Mamalahoa highway Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026, near Naalehu, Hawaii.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREGORY BULL, COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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