

Once-powerful Hawaii hurricane downgraded to tropical storm

HONOLULU (AP) — A powerful hurricane that threatened Hawaii for a week rapidly disintegrated to become a tropical storm south of Honolulu. But meteorologists warned heavy rains could still wallop the islands with flash flooding and punishing winds.

Lane dumped nearly 3 feet of rain on parts of the Big Island of Hawaii over the past two days, forcing residents to flee their homes in waist-high water and officials to clear a series of landslides.

Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell said people need to be vigilant and not let their guard down. But he was happy to hear the storm deteriorated.

"The good news is Lane got weak and fell apart. We dodged a bullet," he said at a news conference on Friday.

Lane roared toward the island chain early this week as the most powerful type of hurricane measured: a Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. That meant it was likely to cause catastrophic damage with winds 157 mph (252 kph) or above.

But upper-level winds known as shear swiftly tore the storm apart. By late Friday, the National Weather Service said Lane had maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 mph) as it slowly twisted west about 120 miles (240 km) south of Honolulu.

The outer bands of the hurricane dumped as much as 3 feet (1 meter) of rain in 48 hours on the mostly rural Big Island. The main town of Hilo, population 43,000, was flooded Friday with waist-high water as landslides shut down roads.

Margaret Collins, 69, woke up Thursday night to sounds in her Hilo backyard.

"So I got up out of bed and looked out my bedroom window and saw water 3 feet high gushing past my window," she said. "And that's when I realized I was standing in water."

Collins called a neighbor for help, who crawled through bushes to bring her out of the house, half-carrying her as she clutched a plastic bag with medication.

The water knocked down a cement wall and lifted her truck out of the carport, send-



Bodyboarders jump into the surf along Waikiki Beach ahead of Hurricane Lane, Friday, Aug. 24, 2018, in Honolulu.

AP Photo/John Locher

ing it toward her neighbor's house, she said.

"My house is completely inundated with mud-water," said Collins, who was told the damage wouldn't be covered by insurance. She hopes she can get federal assistance.

Elsewhere on the Big Island, the National Guard and firefighters rescued six people and a dog from a flooded home, while five California tourists were rescued from another house.

A different type of evacuation took place on Oahu, the state's most populated island.

Officials with the Department of Land and Natural Resources transferred about 2,000 rare Hawaiian snails from a mountain marsh to offices in downtown Honolulu. A staffer will spend the night and place ice around their cages in case the air conditioning goes out.

Some of the snails are the last of their kind, including one named George that's the sole remaining *Achatinella apexfulva* in captivity. Staff members are trying to keep him safe in case he's able to reproduce.

As flooding hit the Big Island, brush fires broke out in areas of Maui and Oahu susceptible to flames.

Some residents in a shel-

ter on Maui had to flee when a fire got too close, and another fire forced people from their homes. A woman got burns on her hands and legs and was flown to Honolulu, Maui County spokesman Rod Antone said. Her condition wasn't clear.

A man posted a video on Instagram showing flames several stories high starting to envelop parked cars. Josh Galinato said he was trying to sleep when he smelled smoke in his apartment in the tourist town of Lahaina.

"I opened up my front door, and I just saw the fire spreading and coming downhill," Galinato said. He and neighbors honked horns to alert others to the danger.

Joseph Azam, who was vacationing in Maui with family and friends, hoped rain from the hurricane arrived before the flames did.

"Trying to figure which comes first, the fire or the rain," said Azam, who's from Oakland, California, and is staying at a hotel. "We're praying the rain arrives soon."

Others prayed for the rain to stay away.

In Waikiki, the man-made Ala Wai Canal is likely to flood if predicted rains arrive, said Ray Alexander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engi-

neers. The canal marks the northern boundary of the Waikiki tourist district. Worries that it could overflow in heavy rains have prompted efforts to reduce the risk.

Swimmers and surfers ignored warnings from authorities and plunged into powerful waves at Oahu's famed Waikiki Beach, which was closed.

Emergency officials said repeatedly over loudspeakers: "Please get out of the water! It's very dangerous!" Honolulu mayor Caldwell pleaded with tourists that they were putting themselves in danger as the storm churned closer.

Crystal Bowden, a tourist from California, watched powerful waves crash against cliffs on Oahu's southeast coast.

"I came in to visit, got here just in time for the hurricane," Bowden said. "We're kind of excited."

Federal Emergency Management Agency officials said about 2,000 people were in shelters, mostly in Oahu. Honolulu's shelters would stay open until midday Saturday, Caldwell said.

The central Pacific gets fewer hurricanes than other regions, with about only four or five named storms a year. Hawaii rarely gets hit.

Trump delays Pompeo's visit to North Korea

By ZEKE MILLER AND MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Friday he has directed Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to delay a planned trip to North Korea, citing insufficient progress on denuclearization.

Trump put some blame on Beijing, saying he does not believe China is helping "because of our much tougher Trading stance."

The surprise announcement appeared to mark a concession by the president to domestic and international concerns that his prior claims of world-altering progress on the peninsula had been strikingly premature.

"I have asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo not to go to North Korea, at this time, because I feel we are not making sufficient progress with respect to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," Trump tweeted Friday, barely two months after his June meeting with the North's Kim Jong Un in Singapore.

Trump's comment followed a report issued Monday by the International Atomic Energy Agency outlining "grave concern" about the North's nuclear program. It came a day after Pompeo appointed Stephen Biegun, a senior

executive with the Ford Motor Co., to be his special envoy for North Korea and said he and Biegun would visit next week.

The State Department never confirmed details of the trip, but it had been expected that Pompeo would be in Pyongyang for at least several hours Monday, according to several diplomatic sources familiar with the plan.

White House officials declined to specify what prompted Trump to call off Pompeo's trip or what had changed since the president's rose-colored-glasses assessments of the nuclear situation just days ago.

A senior White House official said Trump made the decision to cancel the visit Friday morning during a meeting with Pompeo, Biegun, chief of staff John Kelly and National Security Adviser John Bolton, who joined by phone. Intelligence and defense officials were not in the meeting, the official said, seeming to indicate that the breakdown was diplomatic in nature. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal deliberations.

The State Department had no immediate comment on the matter and referred questions to the White House.

Trump laid unspecified blame on China.



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump walk across the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Friday, Aug. 24, 2018, to board Marine One helicopter for a short trip to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., en route to Columbus, Ohio.

Congressman, wife plead not guilty to illegal spending

By JULIE WATSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter was swarmed by demonstrators yelling "shame on you!" as he left a federal courthouse Thursday in San Diego after pleading not guilty to charges of illegally using his campaign account for personal expenses.

The California Republican and his wife, Margaret, entered their pleas in federal court, where prosecutors said bond could be set low

because the couple is living paycheck to paycheck. The judge agreed to set it at \$15,000 for the congressman and at \$10,000 for his wife. The court also required each bond be secured by the signature of a related, financially responsible adult.

After the arraignment, demonstrators holding signs that read "Duncan Hunter Ethics and Integrity Matter" and "Crooked Duncan Hunter" followed him as he walked to a pickup truck. He got in and removed a "Lock me up!" sign shoved onto the

windshield as he was driven away. His wife was not seen leaving the courthouse after the arraignment.

A 60-count indictment unsealed Tuesday charges the couple used more than \$250,000 to finance family trips to Italy and Hawaii, golf outings, school tuition, theater tickets and even fast food purchases, and then attempted to conceal the illegal spending in federal records. The judge ordered the couple to not leave the United States and Hunter to hand over his two legally owned firearms.

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