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2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season Was Sixth Costliest on Record

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Hurricane damage caused by Category 1 Fiona in Puerto Rico on Sept. 17, 2022.

As Caribbean residents heave a sigh of relief now that the Atlantic Hurricane Season is over, a look back at the past six months reveals that the 2022 season, which ended on Wednesday November 30, was the sixth costliest on record.

There were 14 named storms this year, 8 of which were hurricanes. Two of those hurricanes were classed as major. These storms caused an estimated \$53.5 billion worth of damage across the Caribbean, Central America and the United States, and killed over 300 people.

In the region, Belize was one of the nations significantly impacted by hurricane activity this year. In early October, Julia brought heavy rains and flooding to northern and western Belize, resulting

in major losses in the agricultural sector.

On November 2nd, Hurricane Lisa made landfall near Belize City as a Category One hurricane, the first hurricane to hit the country in November since 1942. Like Julia the previous month, Lisa uprooted trees, downed power lines and caused intense flooding, triggering a nationwide lockdown that lasted the evening of landfall to the next morning.

While damage from Lisa is still being tabulated, the last situation report from the Pan American Health Organization indicated that as of November 16th, some 172,000 thousand Belizean residents were affected by Lisa's fury. Approximately 5,000 homes sustained damage with an estimated 500 houses being completely destroyed.

In just Belize alone, estimates are that \$100 million is needed to address damage to public infrastructure from Lisa, with \$10 million needed for houses and \$11 million required for food, clothing, construction materials and household supplies.

Hurricane Ian, one of 2022's two major hurricanes, was ranked the fifth-deadliest hurricane in the Atlantic for the past 60 years. Ian killed at least 145 people and caused over \$50 billion dollars in damage as it traversed its destructive path, with most of the damage sustained in Florida.

On September 27th, Ian, which reached Category 4 at its strongest, laid waste to western Cuba as a category 3 hurricane, causing 5 deaths and bringing with it walls of water and winds of up to 125 miles per hour. The total collapse of the islands power grid forced residents out into storm conditions to gather food and necessary supplies before sunset left them in darkness. Extensive flooding left many Cubans stuck in knee-high water inside their homes, while fields of crops — including tobacco, an agricultural mainstay for Cuba — were decimated. One of the largest tobacco-growing areas, north of Santiago de Cuba, was reportedly completely destroyed.

Sea swells generated by Ian's passage affected Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, with both countries also experiencing high levels of rainfall. Rising water levels forced road closures in both countries, and flash flooding caused by the impact of the hurricane's outer bands also occurred.

The second major hurricane of the 2022 Atlantic season was Fiona, which formed just 9 days before Ian in September. As a tropical storm, Fiona dumped inches of water onto Guadeloupe, causing massive flooding and two deaths — one when raging waters swept a house away with a man still inside. Another resident who was reported missing during the storm was subsequently declared dead as well.

Fiona strengthened to a Category 1 hurricane before barreling into Puerto Rico on September 17th with winds of up to 85 miles per hour and as many as 30 inches of rainfall, claiming the lives of 25 people. The territory suffered widespread power outages, floods and landslides on the 33rd anniversary of the devastation of Hurricane Hugo.

Tropical Storm Nicole, on November 9th, brought a dangerous storm surge to islands in Northwestern Bahamas, with coastal flooding reported well into Wednesday night.

Abaco, the group of islands and cays which was practically obliterated by Hurricane Dorian in 2019 was again severely impacted by Nicole, the first storm to hit the Bahamas since Dorian's incredible trauma was visited upon Abaco and Grand Bahama in September of that year.

A Category 1 Nicole slammed into Vero Beach Florida on November 10th, impacting several parts of the state that were already trying to recover from Hurricane Ian only six weeks prior.

Despite most storm activity in the Atlantic usually occurring between mid-August to mid-October, there were no named storms between July 3rd and August 31st this year. The 2022 Atlantic hurricane season also featured the most November hurricane formations on record - three - tying with the 2001 season in that regard.

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