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Friday, 27 January 2023

Severe Tropical Storm “Cheneso” still active in the Mozambique Channel

For much of this week, “Cheneso” has aimlessly swirled around in the eastern part of the Mozambique Channel, just off the western coast of Madagascar, without much overall movement of the system. As at 02h00 South African Standard Time (SAST) “Cheneso” was positioned at 21.0 South and 42.0 East, moving slowly south-westwards at 5 knots (about 9 km/h) with a central pressure estimated to be 982 hPa.

The latest numeric weather prediction (NWP) models, as well as guidance from the Regional Specialist Meteorological Centre (RSMC) at La Reunion Island, suggest that “Cheneso” will continue to move slowly south-westwards today. Given that “Cheneso” is currently classified as a “Severe Tropical Storm”, sustained winds around the core, or vortex, of the system can be expected to be fairly damaging, of the order of 89 to 118 km/h. Moreover, very rough seas, in the region of 4 to 6 metres can also be expected in the vicinity of the system.

By Saturday, 28 January, “Cheneso” is expected to adopt a more southerly track, passing close to Europa Island. Furthermore, it is also expected that “Cheneso” will, at least temporarily, intensify to a “Tropical Cyclone”, with sustained winds of 118-166 km/h. The system should also continue to exhibit a well-defined “eye”, as is currently the case (Figure 1).

Given current guidance from numeric weather prediction models (NWP), the South African Weather Service (SAWS) can confidently state that this system is not expected to directly affect South Africa. With reference to Figure 3, the ECMWF ensemble guidance of 18h00 UTC last night suggests high confidence that “Cheneso” will not deviate much from the current predicted track (Figure 2) and will start to adopt faster overall movement towards the south-east on Sunday and on Monday, when a so-called “poleward and accelerating” track can be expected, allowing the system to transition into extra-tropical waters of the south-west Indian Ocean.

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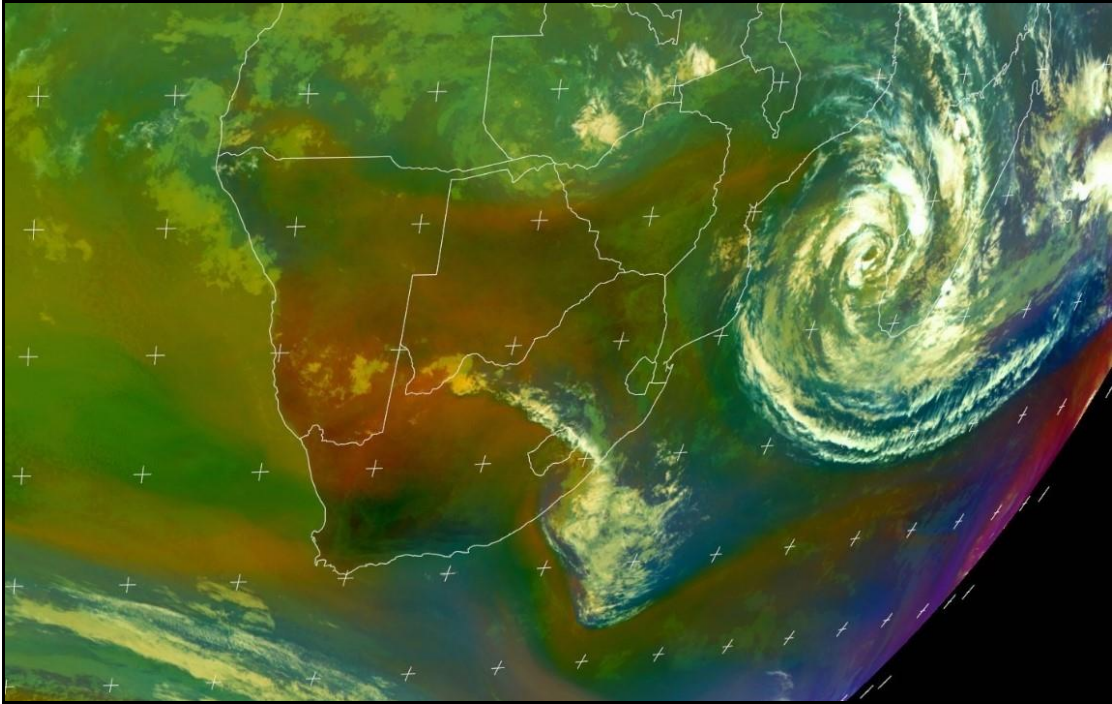


Figure 1: Satellite image of Severe Tropical Storm “Cheneso” located over the eastern half of the Mozambique Channel at 10h00 SAST this morning. Mozambique is located to the left of the image. Image courtesy of Eumetsat (© Eumetsat 2023)

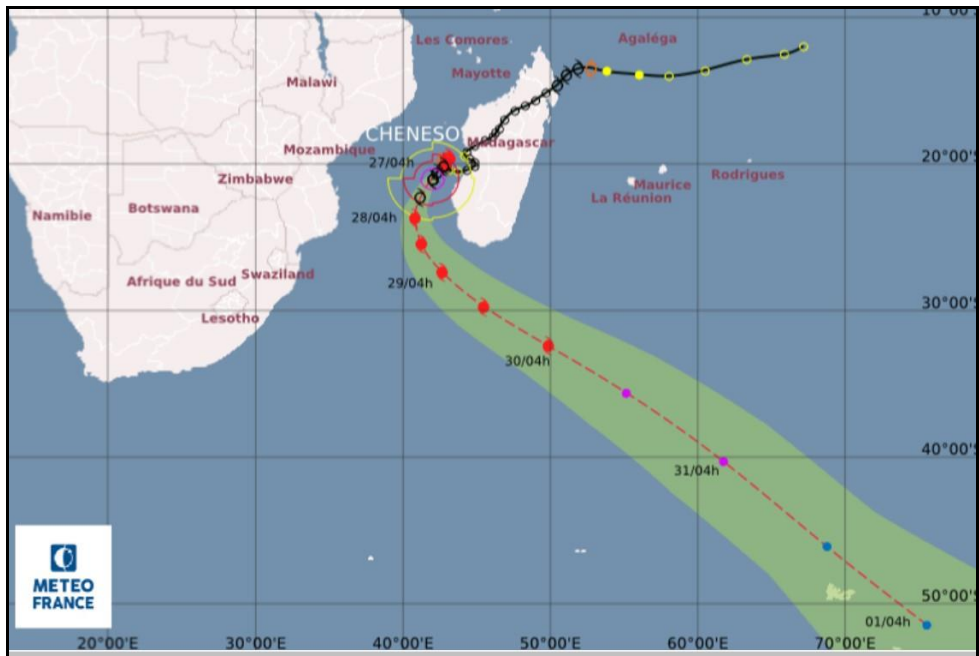


Figure 2: The forecast track for “Cheneso”, issued by RSMC La Reunion at 02h00SAST this morning, Friday 27 January 2023. Source: WMO RSMC La Reunion

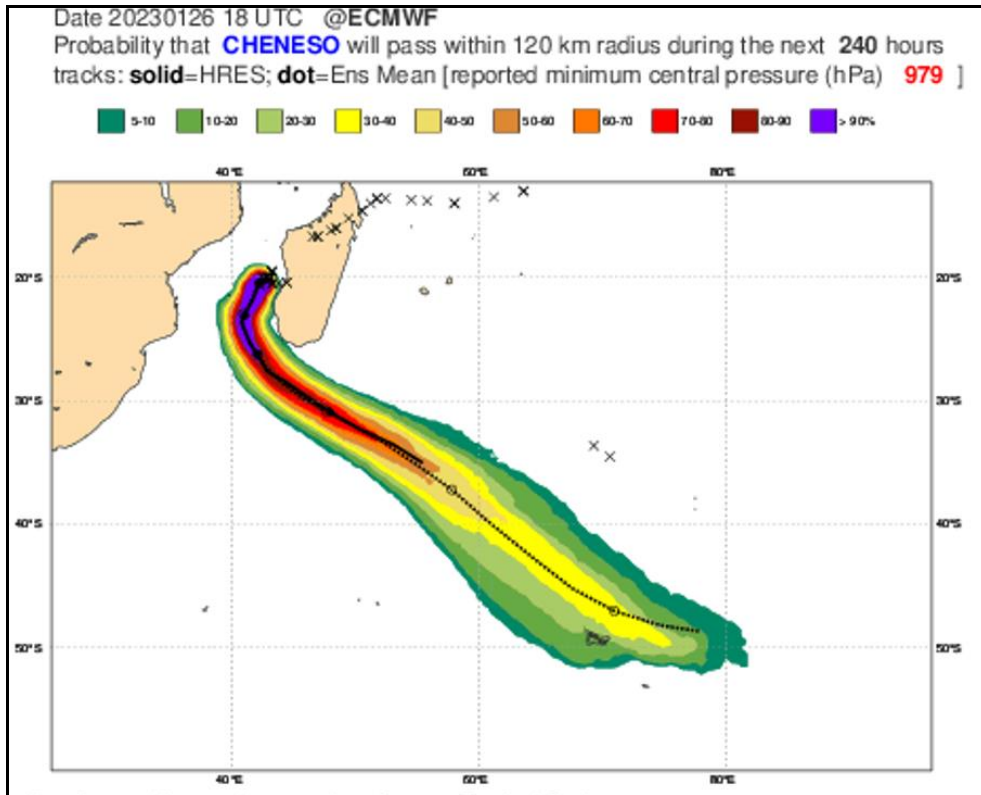


Figure 3: The ensemble model forecast track for “Cheneso”, issued by European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) at 18H00 UTC 26 January 2023, confirming a high level of confidence, regarding the future movement of “Cheneso”. Source: ECMWF

The SAWS will continue to monitor this system and will issue further updates as and when required.

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