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20 January 2021

UPDATE ON TROPICAL STORM “ELOISE”

“Eloise” is currently situated over the northern parts of Madagascar, expected to move south-westwards and enter the Mozambique Channel tomorrow, 21 January 2021. Once entering these warm waters, “Eloise” is expected to intensify further, reaching Intense Tropical Cyclone intensity on Saturday, just before making landfall around Vilankulos, Mozambique that evening (Fig.1).

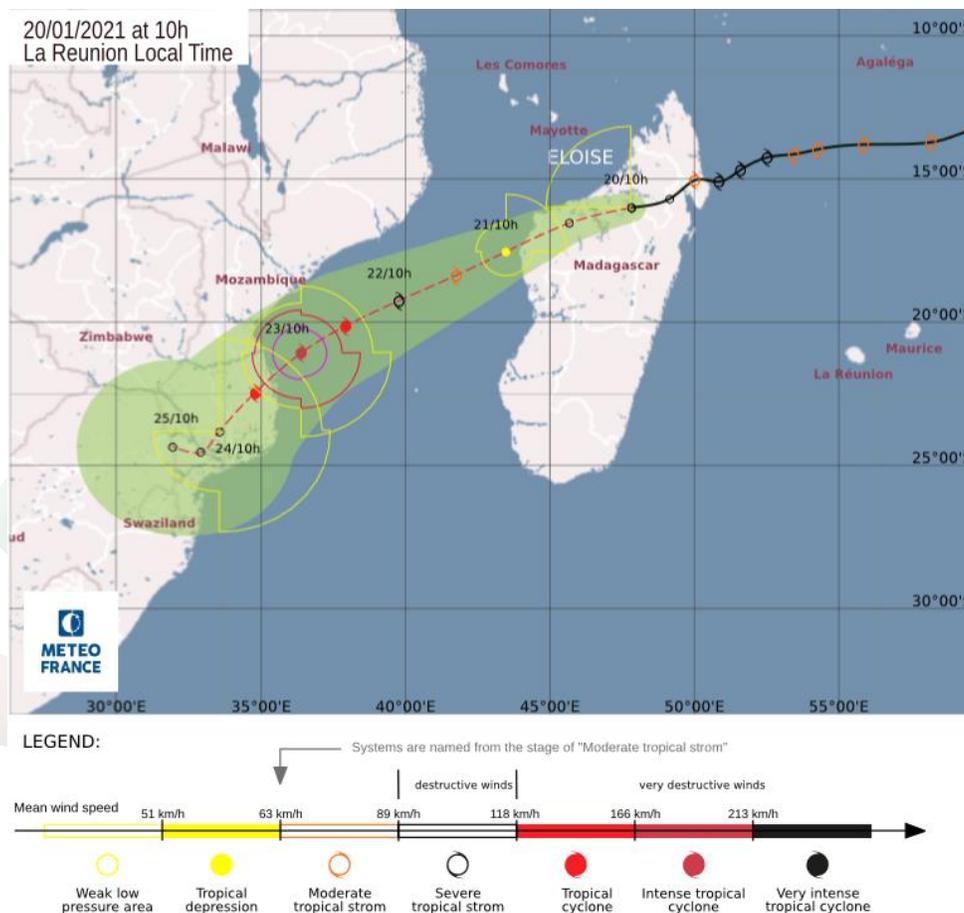


Figure 1: Forecasted track of “Eloise” issued by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) La Reunion (MeteoFrance). Image courtesy of RSMC: La Reunion

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As “Eloise” makes landfall, storm surge, excessive rain and very destructive winds (166-213 km/h) are expected along the Mozambique coastline and adjacent interior.

What does this mean for South Africa?

After making landfall, “Eloise” is expected to track further south-westwards (Fig. 1) towards the border of South Africa and Mozambique. While overland, weakening is expected to take place, however, extreme rainfall is still expected over southern Mozambique, the eastern lowveld and escarpment of Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces as well as northern KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa on Sunday, 24 January 2021 and continuing into Monday, 25 January 2021. Possible impacts as a result of all this rain include widespread flooding, damage to roads and bridges as well as possible displacement of affected communities.

This system is likely to result in Gauteng and North West provinces also receiving some rainfall on Monday and Tuesday, however at this stage such rainfall is not expected to be of an extreme or damaging nature or result in the impacts mentioned above.

It is important to note that the accurate prediction of the track (or path) of tropical weather disturbances is very challenging indeed. Tropical weather systems are notorious for their often erratic and unpredictable movement. SAWS will therefore continue to closely monitor this system and will keep the public advised via regular updates across a variety of media platforms.

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