

Tropic Cyclones Threaten Uk and Europe

Date: 06-17-2008 10:31 AM CET

Category: [Industry, Real Estate & Construction](#)

Press release from: [Global Warming Alliance](#)



London – Powerful winds from extra tropic cyclones could threaten both UK and Europe with the potentially destructive force of a tropical category four hurricane, global warming researchers warned at a conference held at the Institute of Physics on the 6th June.

The Global Warming Alliance, which monitors the core pressures of Atlantic depressions and extra tropical cyclones, revealed dramatic evidence of the increase in risks from devastating super winds for the UK and Europe.

The conference was attended by emergency planners from several London Boroughs as well as members of Climate Wise, the initiative launched by the Prince of Wales last September to get insurance companies to encourage the public to adapt to the growing impact of climate change as well as to promote climate friendly behaviour.

‘When we think of hurricanes or cyclones we automatically think of the tropics. That is where all the action is.’

Cyclones outside that band of latitude are called Extra Tropic Cyclones. These are common and are becoming more intense said Donald Burfitt-Dons, chairman of the Global Warming Alliance.

‘We have seen steadily rising numbers of these intense winter systems in the North Atlantic. So far this year alone we have had five make landfall on continental Europe.’

Large scale changes in the atmosphere itself have been taking place such as the boundary layer tropopause moving higher by 900 feet. Also the Hadley Cells have expanded towards the poles by one degree of latitude or 60 nautical miles over the last thirty years. That change represents a huge volumetric increase in stored heat energy which must be recycled to the poles one way or the other’.

GWA said they believed the extra energy being released now in extra tropic cyclones was part of the planets way of redistributing it.

The Global Warming Alliance has for some years reported that more energy is being released via hurricanes as the globe warms, a view now shared by the IPCC in its latest 2007 report which stated that the power of these storms “had increased notably.” Research has shown an increase in total energy of tropical cyclones of seventy percent, while wind strength itself has increased by fifteen percent.

Such an increase in velocity plays out as a doubling in aeronautical force and even more in destructive damage.

Super winds are a particular risk for densely populated countries in Europe. Londoners for example would not know what to do to protect themselves and their property against such an eventuality.

Over the past ten years eighteen ETCs made landfall. We are also seeing typhoon twins or two storms one following another within a day or so.

During the half century from 1948 to 1997 thirteen windstorms hit Europe, an average of one every three point eight years.

The two most catastrophic in terms of human life, the storms of 1953 and 1962, had almost identical core pressures. Now we are getting extra tropic cyclones with pressures 12 millibars lower than that.

All cyclones are accompanied by heavy rainfall and flooding which could threaten out cities.

Tim Reeder, Scientist for the Thames 2100 Project said that while the barrier was considered adequate protection for London at the moment further measures may be required depending on what storm surges we actually get. 'A new barrier in the Thames would take up to fifteen years to build.' he said.

The conference also heard that 2008 could see an increase in the number of tornadoes across the UK as has been occurring in the USA.

The geographical position where polar air masses meet tropical ones coming up from the equator makes the UK a fertile breeding ground for tornadoes.

Mark Jones, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Essex said, 'In the event of a disaster such as an extra tropic cyclone, power lines would be down. So it's no good then looking up on the internet what to do. In these sort of conditions nothing electrical works.'

Low plain flooding in the event of a cyclone could mean that more high volume water pumps would be required. 'Fire fighting hoses are completely inadequate to deal with large volume flood water.'

Louise Burfitt-Dons, Campaign Director for GWA said, 'With climate change what we regard now as one off events could become part of our run of the mill expectations. There is an overall feeling that the public should be better informed about how to protect themselves and their property and not just rely completely on the emergency services'.

The global warming research and campaigning group urged the Government to develop a plan to educate the public as to what measures they should take individually in the event of a cat 4 equivalent extra tropic cyclone crossing the U.K.

Donald Burfitt-Dons said: 'It seems to us inevitable that more and stronger super winds will sweep across our shores. We should prepare ourselves now.'

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About GWA: The Global Warming Alliance Ltd is a not for profit company involved in research into climate change effects in the atmosphere due to global warming. We campaign too with the objective of heightening understanding of future impacts the greenhouse effect is likely to have focussing mainly in the atmospheric science area.

[You can find this press release here](#)