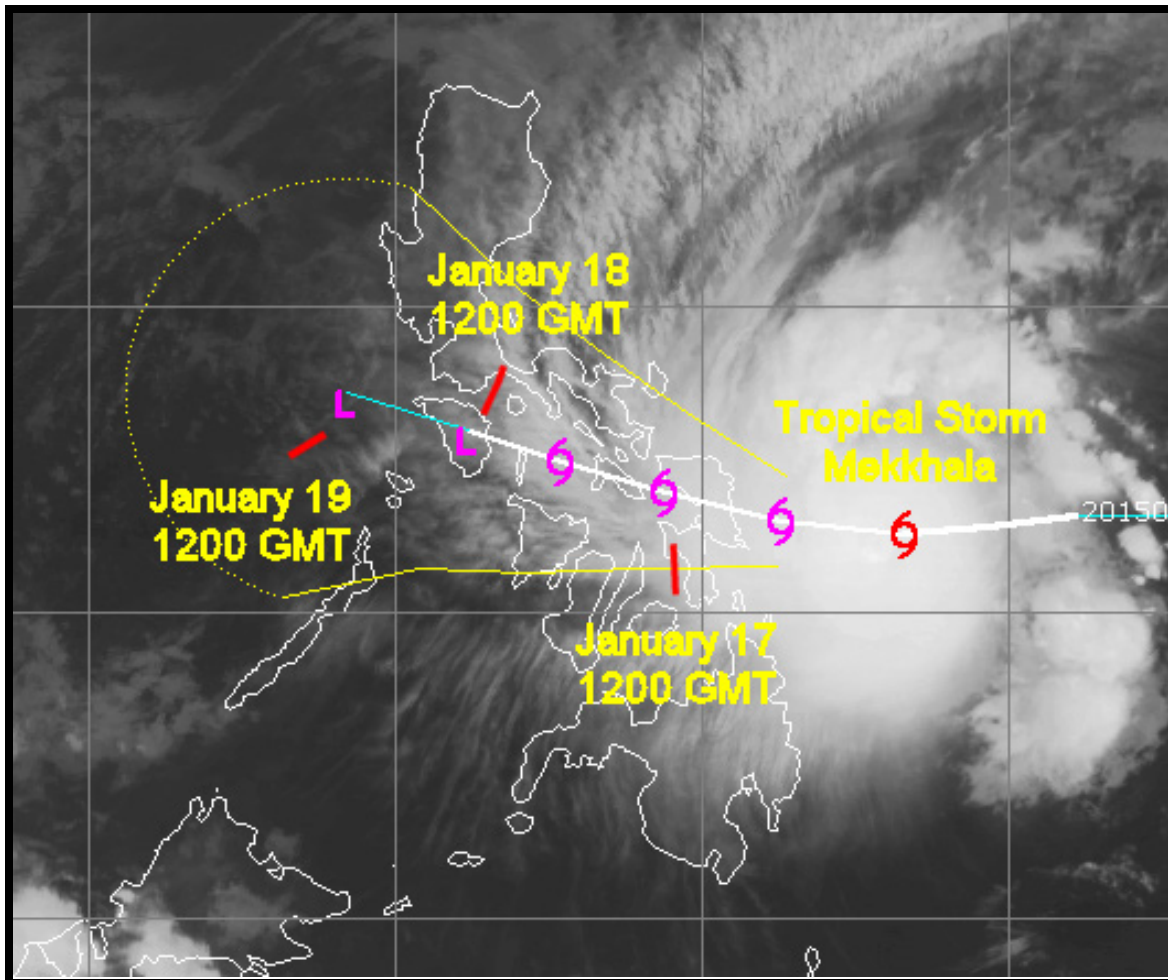


Central Philippines Brace For Tropical Storm Mekkhala

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, January 16 (World Weather Inc.) –Tropical Storm Mekkhala’ predicted movement did not vary greatly overnight. The weak tropical storm is still slated to advance across the Visayan Islands this evening through Sunday morning before dissipating by Sunday afternoon. The eastern and central Visayas region and much of Luzon Island will receive several inches of rain due to Mekkhala. Mindanao will be too far to the south for rainfall or wind from the storm to impact the island.

At 1500 GMT, Tropical Storm Mekkhala was located near 11.3 north, 127.8 east or 541 miles east-southeast of Manila, Philippines. Movement was westerly at 16 mph during the previous six hours. Maximum sustained surface wind speeds were at 58 mph with gusts up to 75 mph. Tropical storm force wind speeds (greater than 39 mph) were occurring up to 75 miles away from the center of the system.



The outer rain bands of Mekkhala will begin to track into the eastern Visayas later this afternoon before the disturbance makes landfall this evening. Mekkhala will slowly drift west-northwesterly across central portions of the Philippines Saturday before shifting to the

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north-northwest by Sunday morning. The storm will steadily weaken while moving through the Visayas region. Mekkhala will be fully dissipated by Sunday afternoon.

The greatest concern with regards to Tropical Storm Mekkhala will be flooding. The eastern Visayan Islands are already excessively wet and dealt with floods at the end of December and earlier in January. The additional rain will again promote flooding in many areas possibly causing some damage to rice and other low-lying crops. Samar Island and Luzon may be most vulnerable to flooding.

Rain amounts from Mekkhala will range from 2.00 to 6.00 inches with locally greater amounts in the eastern and central Visayas region along with southern and eastern sections of Luzon Island. Western Luzon and the western Visayas will receive up to 2.00 inches. Mindanao will not receive any rain from Mekkhala.

Wind speeds will not be high enough to cause significant damage to crops or personal property. Damage to second season rice and corn will be possible in the eastern Visayas where flooding is most likely. No severe damage is anticipated because of the storm's small size and weak intensity. Harvesting will likely be delayed for several days as well.

Alternating periods of light precipitation and dry weather will evolve for the remainder of the coming week across the Philippines. The lack of significant follow up rain will help flood water recede.

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