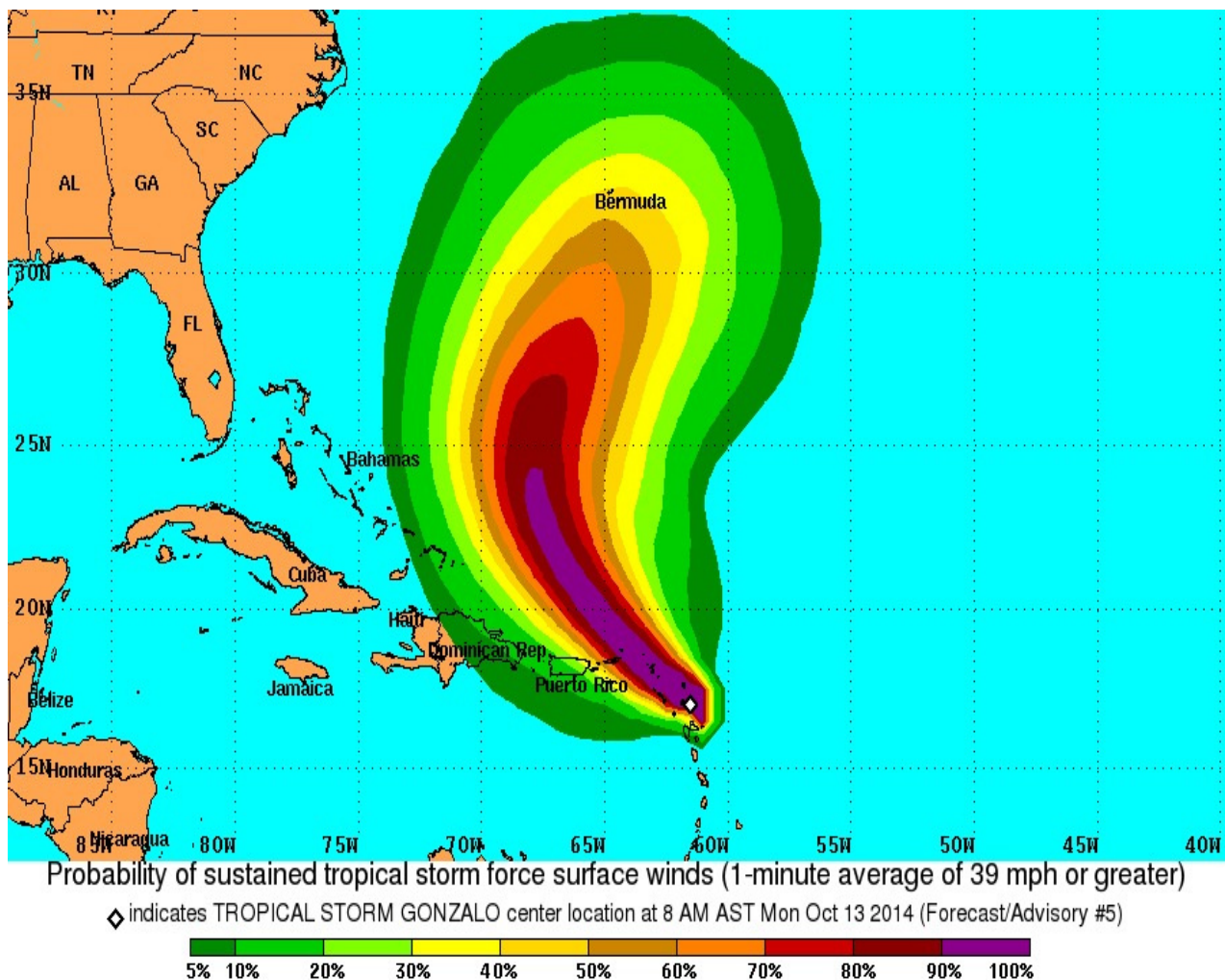


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Center Of Gonzalo To Pass Near Virgin Islands, Residents Urged To Take Precaution

VIC News / Published On October 13, 2014 02:49 PM /

Ernice Gilbert October 13, 2014



Hurricane Gonzalo is barreling its way to the U.S. Virgin Islands and the center of the storm is expected to pass near the territory on Monday night, VITEMA has made known through a press release.

“According to the latest forecasts, Tropical Storm Gonzalo continues to strengthen and is forecasted to pass over the Virgin Islands tonight, which means we will experience the full brunt of the tropical storm force winds and heavy rainfall associated with this system,” said VITEMA Acting Director Austin Callwood. “It’s important that the public immediately begin to take steps to prepare their families and properties by stocking up on all of the basic necessities. Give special consideration to children, the elderly and pets in the

home. Also, prepare your property by removing debris from around the home that can become projectiles. At this point, boaters should be also advised to remain in port and should be working to secure their vessels.”

“We encourage to monitor VI Alert or to stay tuned to local radio, or a NOAA weather radio for updated storm information,” Callwood added.

A flash flood warning remains in effect for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, as Gonzalo continues its movement at latitude 16.8 north, and longitude 60.9 west. That’s about 290 miles east-southeast of St. Thomas. The storm continues to travel at 12 mph.

According to the [National Weather Service](#) (NWS) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, “Heavy rains associated with Gonzalo will overspread the Virgin Islands on Monday evening and reach Puerto Rico early Tuesday morning.” The government agency said about 4 to 8 inches of rain are expected across the Virgin Islands and eastern Puerto Rico, and deteriorating marine conditions with seas up to 20 feet.

Probability of Tropical Storm/Hurricane Conditions

The National Weather Service in Puerto Rico says that the chance of hurricane conditions at this time is “less than or equal” to 20 percent.

Winds and Seas

Sustained tropical storm winds force from Gonzalo are forecast to be in the 35 to 45 mph range with up to 70 mph gusts. Seas will begin at less than 7 feet and then increase during the day on Monday to as much as 20 feet along and around the path of Gonzalo.

Storm Surge and Tide

Total water rises of 1 to 3 feet above inundation levels. Large breaking waves will cause dangerous conditions throughout the surf zone and numerous rip currents. Wave action surging upon the coastline and higher than normal water levels may pose a threat to life and property, and produce minor beach erosion.

Message from Governor de Jongh

In a press release issued on Sunday, Governor de Jongh cautioned residents of the territory to monitor closely the storm, and prepare for rain and wind from Monday afternoon through Tuesday.

“In conjunction with our federal partners at FEMA, the National Hurricane Center and the National Weather Service in San Juan, I was provided an extensive update this afternoon by VITEMA Acting Director Austin Callwood on the present position of Tropical Storm Gonzalo and its projected path through our area tomorrow night. I also received a status report on the possible deployment of federal assets to the territory such as the FEMA advance team and other personnel. We have already begun discussion with our commissioners and directors of key local government agencies that would be activated to serve the community during a storm event: VITEMA, Police, Human Services, Public Works, WAPA and the American Red Cross,” de Jongh said.

He added: "I realize that we are in the middle of a long holiday weekend but I urge all residents to get up to speed on the threat of this storm system and take all precautions seriously. VITEMA has begun issuing notices to the public via the news media and through V.I. Alert. Take the necessary steps to protect your homes and your personal belongings as we prepare for the winds and rains associated with this tropical storm."

Elsewhere on Sunday, the U.S. Coast Guard issued a press release advising swimmers, surfers, recreational boaters and mariners to steer clear of the Ocean by noon on Monday, and warned people not to go out to sea if they know that a tropical storm is approaching.

Said Capt. Robert Warren, Sector San Juan commander and captain of the Port San Juan: "Tropical Storm Gonzalo is developing quickly as it heads towards the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. By noon Monday, swimmers and recreational boaters should avoid the ocean and the general public should stay away from shoreline rocks until the tropical storm passes and weather and surf conditions normalize throughout the area. We will continue to monitor the heavy winds and seas along the islands to ensure the safety of the ports in our area of responsibility."

History

Formed early Sunday afternoon, tropical storm Gonzalo is the seventh named storm in the 2014 Atlantic hurricane season, now expected to affect the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Vieques, Culebra, and the British Virgin Islands. Tropical storm warnings are also in effect for:

GUADELOUPE...DESIRADE...LES SAINTES...AND MARIE GALANTE ST. MARTIN
ST. BARTHELEMY ST. MAARTIN SABA AND ST. EUSTATIUS BARBUDA ANTIGUA
ANGUILLA ST. KITTS AND NEVIS MONTSERRAT