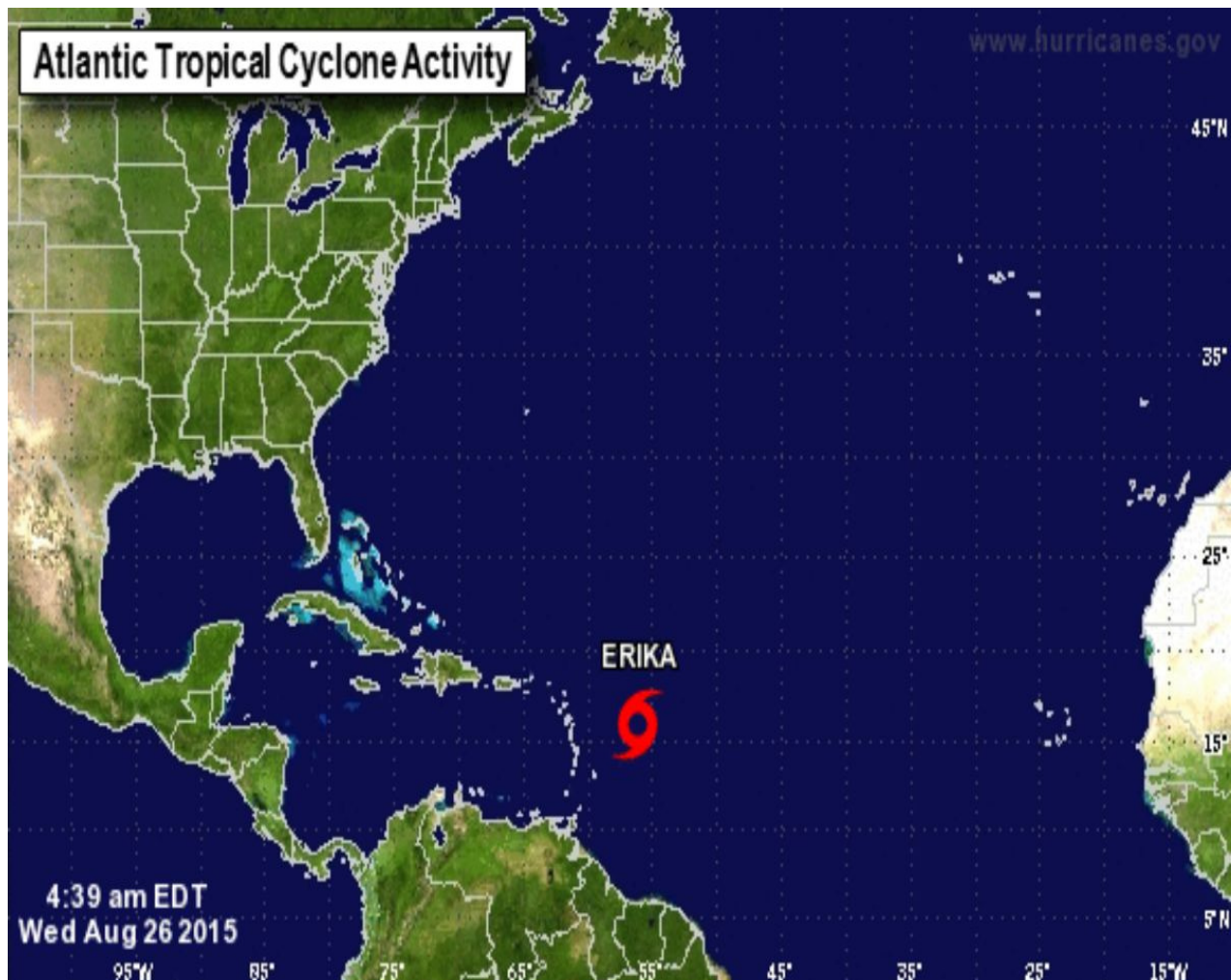


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tropical Storm Warning Issued For USVI, BVI, PR, Vieques And Culebra

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The National Hurricane Center has issued a tropical storm warning for the territory through its latest advisory at 5:00 this morning, as Erika continues its forward movement to the Leeward Islands, and is now expected to make landfall in the territory as a "strong" tropical storm packing winds of 60 miles per hour. Its early effects are expected on Thursday and will strengthen throughout the day into Friday morning.

A tropical storm warning means that tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area within 36 hours.

The Meteorological Service of Antigua has issued a tropical storm warning for Montserrat, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, and the British Virgin Islands.

In light of the strengthening storm's projected path, Governor Kenneth Mapp has announced a press conference for Wednesday morning at Government House in Christiansted, St. Croix, where he is expected to address residents on the seriousness of the storm, and make known preparedness steps his administration has been implementing.

At 5:00 a.m., the center of Tropical Storm Erika was located near latitude 16.1 North, longitude 56.0 West. Erika is moving toward the west near 18 mph, and a west to west-northwestward motion at a slightly slower forward speed is expected over the next 48 hours. On the forecast track, the center of Erika will move near or over portions of the Leeward Islands tonight and move near the Virgin Islands on Thursday.

Maximum sustained winds are near 40 mph with higher gusts. Some slow strengthening is forecast during the next 48 hours. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 105 miles from the center. The estimated minimum central pressure based on data from a NOAA Hurricane Hunter aircraft is 1003 mb (29.62 inches).

WIND: Tropical storm conditions are expected to first reach the warning area in the Leeward Islands tonight, and reach the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico on Thursday. Tropical storm conditions are possible in the watch area tonight and early Thursday.

RAINFALL: Erika is expected to produce total rain accumulations of 2 to 4 inches with maximum amounts of 8 inches across portions of the Leeward Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico through Friday morning.