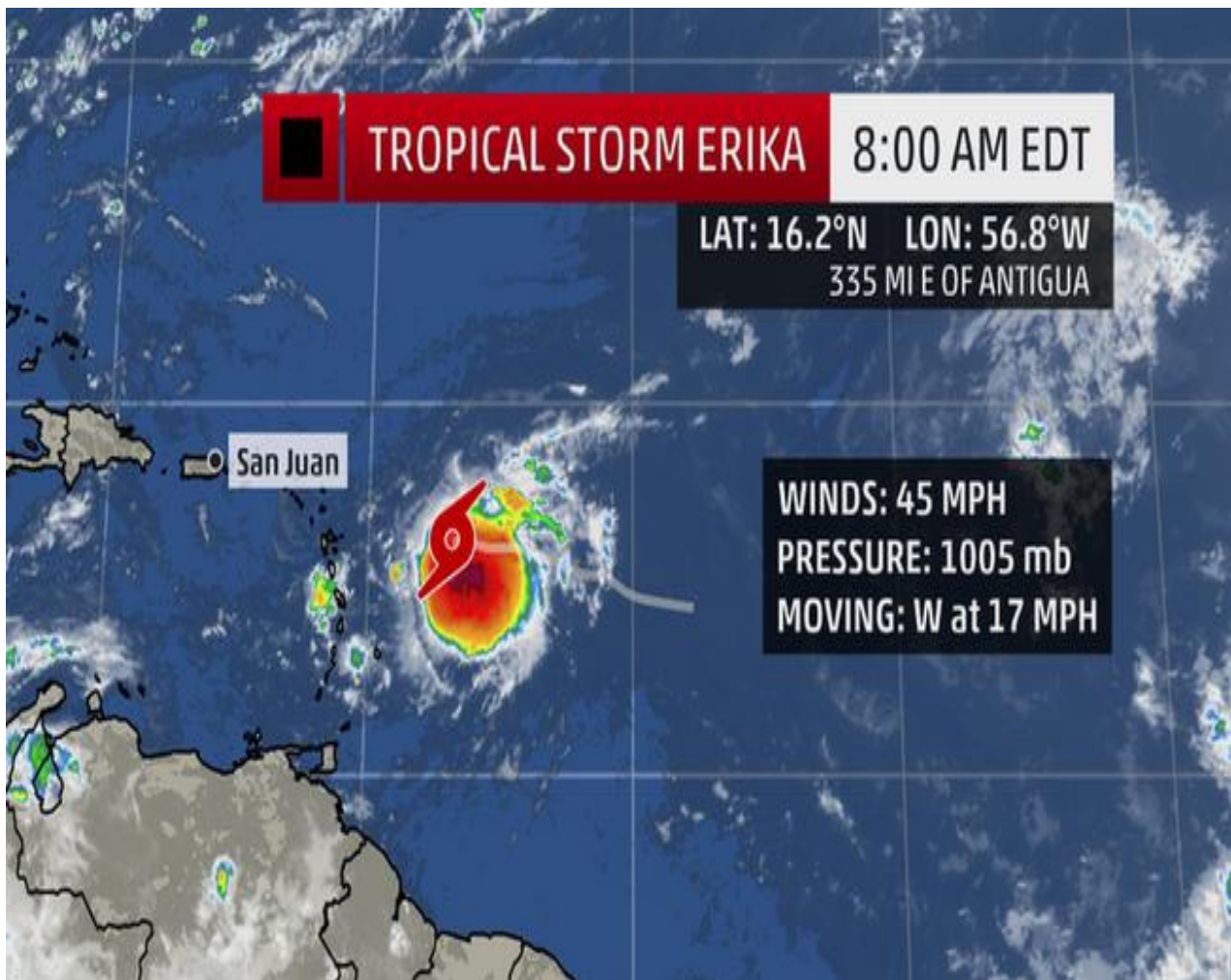


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Erika Strengthens; Will Bring Up To 4 Inches Of Rain And Strong Winds, Forecasters Say

VIC News / **Published On August 26, 2015 02:20 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **August 26, 2015**



Tropical Storm Erika has increased her strength in the Atlantic from 40 to 45 miles per hour winds with higher gusts, according to the National Hurricane Center's latest advisory. The storm is expected to pack winds of up to 50 miles per hour once it makes landfall in the territory on Thursday between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., passing within ten miles of St. Thomas and St. John.

In light of the strengthening storm's projected path, Governor Kenneth Mapp has announced an 11:30 a.m. press conference for Wednesday 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.

A Tropical Storm Warning remains in effect for the territory as Erika continues its approach to the Lesser Antilles. At 8 a.m., the center of the storm was located some 552 miles to the southeast of the Virgin Islands near 16.2 degrees north, 56.8 degrees west.

Some slow intensification is forecast over the next two days. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 105 miles from the center. Tropical storm conditions are expected to first reach the Leeward Islands tonight and reach the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico on Thursday.

The storm is moving to the west at 17 miles per hour and a west to west- northwestward motion is expected over the next 48 hours.

Erika is expected to produce total rain accumulations of two to four inches with maximum amounts of 8 inches across portions of the Leeward Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico through Friday morning. Tropical Storm Erika is expected to produce accumulated rainfall amounts of 2 to 4 inches.

VITEMA and the National Weather Service are advising the public to make final preparations and to closely monitor the development of Tropical Storm Erika.