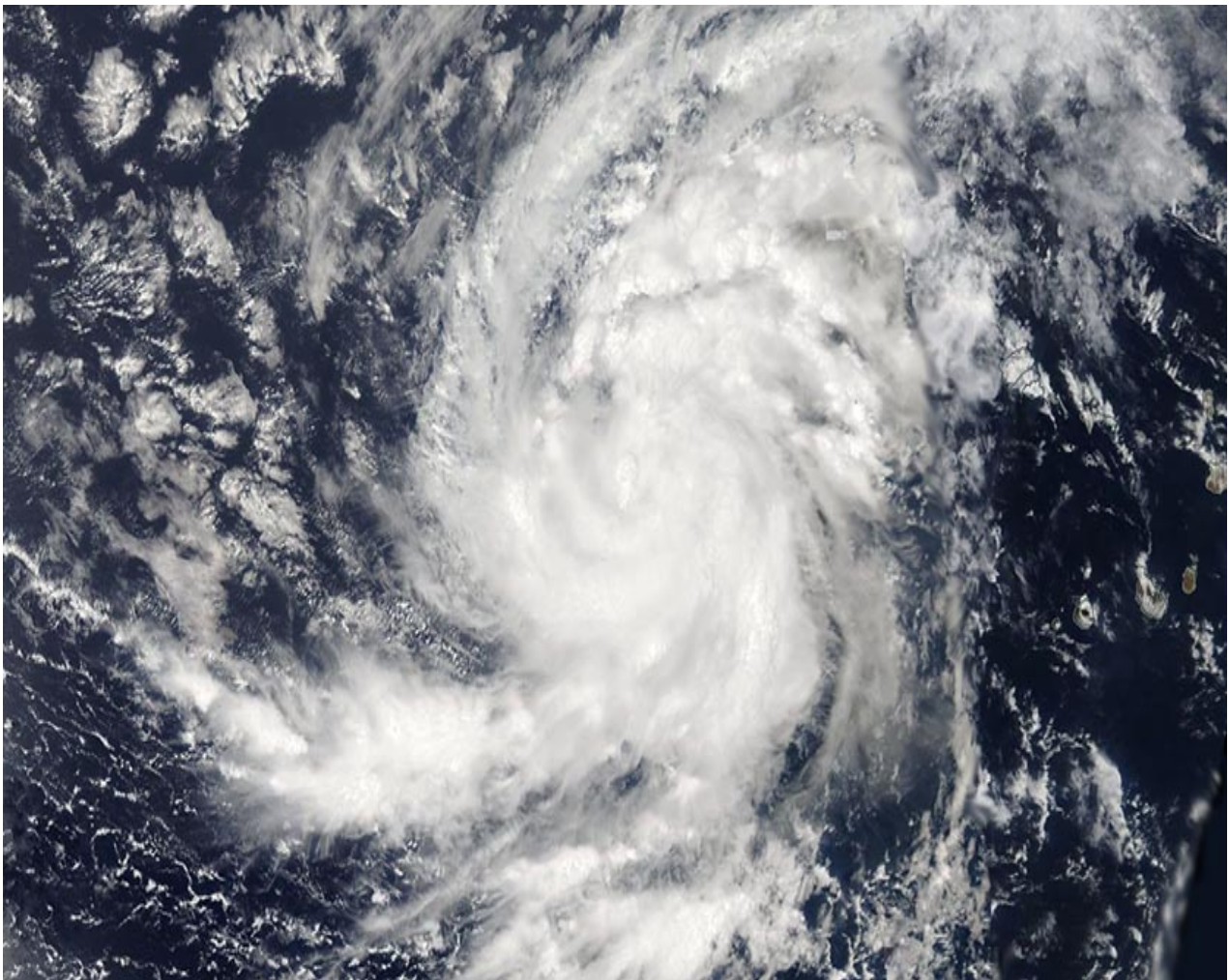


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tropical Storm Irma Expected To Pass Northeast Of Territory As Possible Cat. 3 Hurricane; VITEMA Urges Residents To Be Prepared

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Staff **August 30, 2017**



Tropical Storm Irma formed in the Atlantic today, making it the ninth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season.

According to the [National Hurricane Center](#), at 5:00 p.m., the center of tropical storm Irma was located near latitude 16.4 North, longitude 31.2 West. Irma is moving toward the west near 15 mph (24 km/h). The tropical storm is expected to turn slightly toward the west-northwest at a slower rate of speed for the next couple of days.

Maximum sustained winds are near 60 mph (95 km/h) with higher gusts. Some strengthening is forecast during the next 48 hours and Irma is expected to become a hurricane Thursday or Friday.

Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) Director Mona Barnes was briefed earlier today by the National Weather Service at San Juan. According to forecasters, Irma is expected to pass northeast of the U.S. Virgin Islands midweek next week possibly as Category 3 hurricane. With the system more than 2,000 miles away, forecasters say it is still too early to determine how Irma will impact the territory. However, the National Weather Service is expecting significant wave action, up to 8-foot seas, with this storm.

Ms. Barnes is encouraging the community to remain vigilant and to be prepared. "Now is the time to make sure you have a disaster plan that everyone in the household is aware of, and at least five days worth of emergency supplies for everyone including pets," she said. "We are now in the peak of hurricane season and we also need the community to closely monitor weather reports for information on systems developing in the tropical Atlantic."

The worst time to begin preparing is during a hurricane watch or warning, Ms. Barnes warned.

For more information on how to prepare visit www.ready.gov. For weather alerts, register at www.vialert.gov.

VITEMA says it will continue to provide weather updates as more information becomes available.